Theologia Reformata:

OR,

DISCOURSES

ON THOSE

GRACES and DUTIES

WHICH ARE

Purely Evangelical,

And not contained in the

MORAL LAW:

AND ON THE

Helps, *Motives*, and *Advantages*

Of PERFORMING them.

Being an Entire TREATISE in Four Parts: And if added to the two *Former Volumes*, makes a Compleat Body of DIVINITY.

By the late REVEREND

JOHN EDWARDS, D. D.

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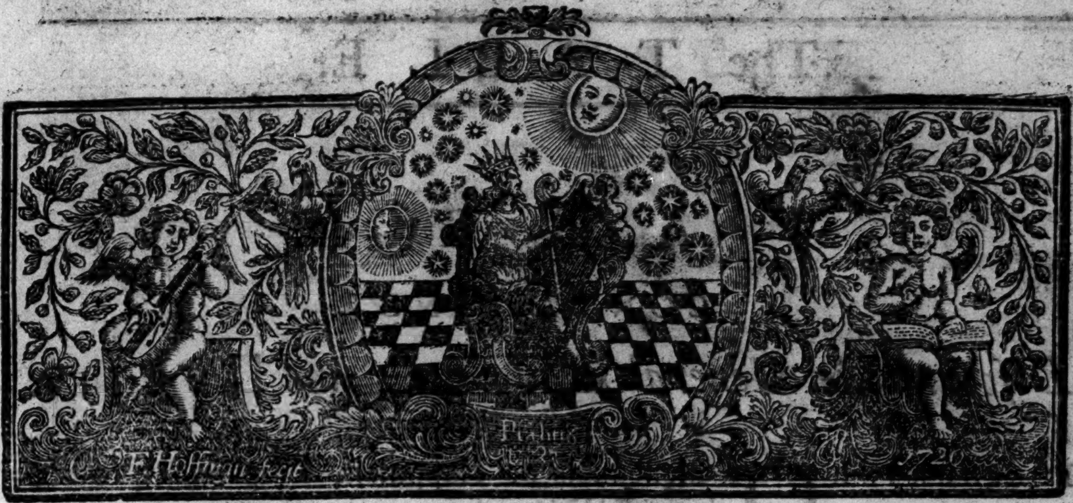

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DISCOURSES

ON

General GRACES *and* DUTIES.

NAMELY,

I. *Of* Sanctification.

II. *Of* Regeneration.

III. *Of* Good Works.

IV. *Of an* Inoffenſive Conſcience.

V. *The Life of a* Chriſtian.

VI. *Of the Imitation of* Chriſt.

A
DISCOURSE
OF
SANCTIFICATION.

1 THESS. iv. 3.

This is the Will of God, even your Sanctification.

SANCTIFICATION and *Regeneration* are in ſome Reſpects the ſame with *Repentance*, but on other Conſiderations they are different from it. For we muſt know, that tho' *Repentance* and *Sanctification*, yea *effectual Calling*, *Converſion*, and *Regeneration* agree, and are united in the general Notion, and in a large Senſe may be ſaid not to differ; yet if we conſider them diſtinctly and exactly, there is this Difference between them: *Repentance* is a Part or Branch of *Sanctification:* For Sanctification, or Holineſs, in the full Extent of it, muſt needs comprize in it, *that* Grace or Duty, which is ſo neceſſary an Ingredient of Sanctity and Piety. And ſo likewiſe *Converſion*, *Regeneration*, and *good Works* are Parts of Sanctification, or Sanctification (in its utmoſt Capacity) includes thoſe in it. But the more particular Difference between *Sanctification* and *Repentance* is this, that Sanctification is a general Term, to ſignify the Purity and Holineſs of a Man's whole Life, from the very Beginning of it to the End: But Repentance, in the ſtrict Notion of it, hath Reſpect only or *chiefly* to what is paſt in a Man's Life; it is a Reſtoring and Amending our Ways, which ſuppoſes Miſcarriages and Miſdemeanors to have been before.

AND then as to the Difference between *Repentance* and *Regeneration*, I conceive this is it; the Change that is wrought in a Man is conſider'd two Ways, either as it comes from God, and hath the Holy Spirit for its Author, or as it refers to Man himſelf, and his Endeavours, but yet not ſo as to exclude God's Help and Aſſiſtance. As to the former Conſideration, that Change is call'd *Regeneration*, or the *new Birth*, and is the more ſignal and immediate Work of God: But as you conſider that Change in the latter Senſe, it is call'd *Repentance*, and it ſignifies our proper Acts and Endeavours. Or, if you will, thus, *Repentance* is a compleat Regeneration or Converſion: And *Regeneration* or Converſion is an initial Repentance, that is, it is the firſt Beginning and Entrance of true and ſaving Repentance; yea, it is the firſt Act of all Sanctification: It is the firſt ſaving Change of a Sinner's Mind; it is when he firſt grows ſenſible of his Sin and turns unto God.

AND as for *good Works*, they differ from *Regeneration* and *Repentance*, as the Effect differs from the Cauſe. A Holy Converſation is the Fruit and Conſequent of theſe: And accordingly the Apoſtle declar'd unto *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that they *ſhould repent and turn unto God, and do Works meet for Repentance*, Acts xxvi. 20.

HAVING then laid down the true Diſtinction and Difference between theſe fore-named Particulars, I will now briefly and plainly treat of theſe important Doctrines of Chriſtianity; and firſt, from theſe Words, I will ſpeak concerning *Sanctification*, I mean *Sanctification in the General, univerſal Holineſs:* For tho' the Apoſtle in the Words immediately after the Text, we are now treating of, reſtrains *Sanctification* to that particular and peculiar Sanctity, which conſiſts in ſubduing fleſhly Concupiſcence, and in living chaſtly, acquainting the *Theſſalonians*, that they ſhould *abſtain from Fornication*, and that *every one of them ſhould know how to poſſeſs his Veſſel* (that is his Body) *in Sanctification and Honour, not in the Luſt of Concupiſcence, even as the* Gentiles *which know not God:* Though the Apoſtle thus aſſigns particular Inſtances and Acts of Sanctification, yet I ſhall conſider it in the larger and more general Notion, and as the Word here may import an univerſal Purity and Sanctity of Heart and Life. *This is the Will of God, even your Sanctification.* Which Words are brought in here by St. *Paul*, as a Reaſon why the *Theſſalonians* ſhould attend to his Advice in the former Chapter, and in the Beginning of this, why they ſhould ſtudy to be holy and pure in their Lives; this (ſaith he) *is the Will of God*, that ye be holy both in Soul and Body. You are concerned to be ſo as you would pleaſe God, as you are deſirous to obey his Will, and do what he requires of you. The ſame or a like Reaſon we meet with in *v.* 7. [*For God hath not call'd us to Uncleanneſs, but unto Holineſs*]. The End of our being call'd to the Grace of Chriſt, is not that we ſhould defile our ſelves either in Soul or Body, but that we ſhould be holy in all Manner of Converſation, that our Hearts and Lives ſhould be ſanctify'd and purified.

HERE then I will undertake theſe two Things, 1. I will diſcover to you the *true Nature* and *Quality* of *Sanctification*. 2. I will ſhew, that it is the *Will of God*, that we be ſanctified. It is the former of theſe that I intend chiefly to inſiſt upon, and as for the latter, I ſhall bring it in only by way of Inference, in the Cloſe of all.

Firſt, AS to the true Nature and Quality of *Sanctification*; in the general you muſt know, that it is ſomething inherent and real. It is not a bare Denomination, or Relation; and accordingly it is diſtinguiſh'd from four Sorts of Sanctification mention'd, or at leaſt imply'd in Holy Scripture.

1. IT is diſtinguiſh'd from that Sanctification, which is made by *Inſtitution* only, as the Sanctification of the 7th Day, the *Jewiſh* Sabbath, which it is certain had no inherent Holineſs in it, but owed all its Holineſs to the divine Command and Appointment. God was pleas'd to inſtitute that Day rather than the reſt, and thence it is ſaid to be *ſanctified*. But this is not the Sanctification, which the Text ſpeaks of.

2. SANCTIFICATION was made by *Separation* and *Conſecration*. Thus the Prieſts under the Law were ſeparated and ſet apart from the reſt of their Brethren, and thereby were more holy than they. And to this I may refer other legal Ways of Sanctifying, *viz.* by Waſhings and Sprinklings, and divers other Rites and Ceremonies. But this being wholly external and ceremonial, it cannot be of any Affinity with the Sanctification which the Text propounds to us.

3. THERE is a *relative* Sanctification, and ſuch I take to be that of the Elements of Bread and Wine in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and alſo of Baptiſmal Water in the other Sacrament. Thoſe may be ſaid to be Holy, becauſe they have a Relation to that which is moſt Holy. The Bread and Wine repreſent the Body and Blood of Chriſt, the Holy One of God. The Water is a Token and Sign of that inward Purity and Holineſs, which is wrought by the Spirit of God in the Children of Believers. But this is not the Holineſs here intended.

NEITHER 4. Is it that kind of Sanctification which is made by *declaring* and *manifeſting* the Holineſs of a Perſon, which is frequently made Mention of in the Old Teſtament: Where God is ſaid to be ſanctified, when his divine Attributes are declar'd and publiſh'd to the World, when his Glory and Perfections are diſplay'd and diſcovered, and Men are excited thereby to extol and magnify his Name. And this is partly the Meaning of that Petition in the Prayer of our Saviour's own Enditing [hollowed or ſanctified be thy Name] that is, let thy Power and Wiſdom, and all thy other Excellencies be ſpread abroad and divulged; let the World ſee and confeſs thy Holineſs and divine Perfections, and be thou glorified thereby. And thus I have given a ſhort Account of ſome Aceptions of this Term [*Sanctification*] and of all the Things denoted by it.

BUT we have not yet reached the Senſe of the Text; for the Sanctification here ſpoken of is no mere external Thing; neither is it a relative, ritual, nominal or declarative Sanctification (ſuch as thoſe I have mention'd already;) but (to difference it from all theſe) I muſt acquaint you (and I have partly done it already) that it is a *inherent* Holineſs which my Text ſpeaks of, and 'tis ſuch a Holineſs as really exiſts in the Perſon: And becauſe it is wrought by the Spirit of God, therefore 'tis call'd *Sanctification of the Spirit*, 2 Theſ. ii. 13. He is the principal efficient Cauſe of it.

I MIGHT obſerve to you that this Sanctification is expreſs'd in Scripture by ſeveral Terms: And they all convey to us a further and particular Notion of the true Nature of Sanctification. And to thoſe that are converſant in the Word of God, it will be acceptable to underſtand what the Stile of that Holy Book is, and particularly how the Holy Ghoſt is pleas'd to ſet forth the Nature of Sanctification. It cannot eſcape our Obſervation then that the Holy Spirit uſes theſe following Words to expreſs to us univerſal Holineſs or Sanctification. Sometimes it is call'd *Knowledge*, John xvii. 3. *This is Life eternal to know thee the only true God and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent*]. Knowing of God is put in this Place for all Chriſtian Religion, for all Acts of Holineſs and evangelical Purity. Again, by *Faith* is underſtood all Holineſs in ſeveral Places of the New Teſtament: I need not quote them, they are ſo frequent. Sometimes Sanctification is ſtiled the *Love of God*, and *Chriſt*, as in 1 *John* v. 3. 14, 15, 21. At other Times it is expreſs'd by *Sincerity*, Phil. i. 10. John iii. 21. *Goodneſs* is the Word for it, *Acts* ii. 24. Oftentimes it is call'd *Juſtice* or *Righteouſneſs*. And the places are almoſt innumerable where it is ſaid to be the *Fear of God*. Thus by a *Synedoche* (an uſual Figure in Scripture) one eminent Grace is put for all, one ſingle Duty expreſſes every one of them. The Reaſon of which is this, becauſe where there is one evangelical Grace really and truly inherent in the Soul, there all the reſt are likewiſe. One true Grace is not alone in a Man. The ſame Spirit, that is the Author and Beginner, is alſo the Finiſher of the divine Endowments and Graces in the Soul. This may be one Account why univerſal Sanctity is denoted in Scripture by one Grace or Duty.

I MIGHT proceed to ſhew what other Denominations are given to Sanctification. It is call'd the *Circumciſion of the Heart* in ſeveral Places of the Old Teſtament, particularly in *Deut.* x. 16. and *Jer.* iv. 4. And in the New Teſtament it hath the like Title, *Col.* ii. 11. where 'tis call'd *the Circumciſion made without Hands*. In the Eph. v. 26. Chriſt is ſaid to *ſanctify and cleanſe his Church with the Waſhing of Water*, which is a Deſcription of the Church's Sanctification. And in *Heb.* x. 22. This is ſet forth to us by *Sprinkling* and *Waſhing*, alluding without doubt to the ceremonial Law, wherein Impunities and Uncleanneſſes were put away, partly by *Aſperſion*, partly by *Ablution*, and *Baptiſm*, as it is call'd in *Heb.* ix. 10. I might refer you to other Texts of Scripture where Sanctification is call'd *Purging*, and *Purifying*, as in Heb. ix. 14. *James* v. 4. 1 Pet. i. 22. and other Places. But ſo much ſhall ſuffice for the *general Account* which I intended of Sanctification.

NOW I will more *particularly* deſcribe it to you; you muſt be reminded then of this, that there is in every Man by Nature an Habitual Averſion from God, and a Turning to Sin and Evil. This proceeds from the Infection and Defilement which we receiv'd from our firſt Parents. By their Fall we derived Sin upon ourſelves. Our Nature is become polluted. Our Temper is corrupted, our ſpiritual Health is depraved, we have contracted Diſeaſes and Weakneſſes. Now, as the Diſeaſes and Maladies of the Body, ſo thoſe of the Soul cannot be cured but by their Contraries. The Infection of Sin hath invaded us, Habits of Vice have poſſeſſed us; we cannot be healed but by habitual Grace and Holineſs infuſed into us. The Impurity and Defilement of our Nature, muſt be remov'd by ſomething that is Pure and Undefiled. The Sin which is inherent in us muſt be extirpated by inherent Righteouſneſs. And this is that which the Holy Scripture (and the Text in particular) calls *Sanctification.* We are to remember then, that as by *Juſtification* a Believer is freed and acquitted from the Guilt of Sin, ſo by *Sanctification,* he is purged from the Filth and Pollution of it. And theſe two go hand in hand, thoſe whom God juſtifieth he alſo ſanctifieth. There is no Proportion indeed between Chriſt's Righteouſneſs and Ours: There is an infinite Diſtance between them; but this is certain, that as we are juſtified by the meritorious Holineſs and Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, ſo it is requiſite likewiſe that there be wrought in us, by God's Holy Spirit, that Purity and Holineſs whereby we may be ſaid to be perſonally ſanctified. The new Man, the Image of God is to be found in every faithful Soul. This is *created in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs*, Eph. iv. 24. Mark it, it is not a mere relative or barely external Holineſs, but it is the *Holineſs of Truth* (as the Margin of our Bible, according to the *Greek* renders it): It is a real and ſubſtantial Thing. And it muſt needs be ſo, ſeeing it is the very Image of God, and the Divine Nature. For you read in 2 *Peter* i. 4. that in Regard of this Sanctification the Saints are ſaid to be *Partakers of the divine Nature.* The evil and deviliſh Nature poſſeſſed Men before; but now they partake of a heavenly and divine one; for Holineſs is a Reſemblance and Communication of the Perfection which is in God. By this ſanctified and renew'd Spirit we are enabled to conquer and ſubdue all Sin; by this we have Strength given to reſiſt the Temptations and Aſſaults of Satan; by this we are impower'd to conform our Lives to the Rules of the Goſpel, and to do Things agreeable to the divine Laws.

THAT we may have a further Inſight into this Matter, we may take Notice that *Sanctification* is either *habitual* or *actual.* The firſt is in the Faculties of the Soul, and the Operations of the Mind, and eſpecially in the Intentions, Deſires and Inclinations of it. The 2d diſcovers itſelf in the poſitive Exertments of thoſe Faculties, and likewiſe in the outward Actions of the Life, in a godly and upright Converſation. Both theſe are joyn'd together by St. *James* iv. 8. [*Cleanſe your hands, ye Sinners, and purify your hearts ye double-minded.*] The Body and outward Man are in ſome ſort capable of this Grace, *viz.* as they are under the Guidance of the Soul, and with the Soul are ſubject to the Will of God. It is certain that the Subject of Sanctification is the whole Man, not ſome one Part of it only, [1 Theſ. v. 23. *The God of Peace ſanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole Spirit and Soul and Body be preſerved blameleſs unto the Coming of Jeſus Chriſt*]. It is true that Holineſs is primarily and chiefly ſeated in the *Soul* of Man, and among all the Faculties of the Soul, it principally belongs to the *Will*, which is the Spring and Sourſe of all moral Actions: And from thence it diffuſeth it ſelf into the other Faculties of the Mind, the Memory, the Imagination, the Affections and all the Inclinations of the Soul, and by theſe at laſt it is derived into the *bodily Actions* and all the Exerciſes of our Life.

BUT, that we may not be diſcouraged, it will be proper to add, that as there is a *Sanctification* of *Parts* (as Divines uſually ſpeak; and of this I have juſt now ſpoken) ſo there is a Sanctification of *Degrees.* Now, we muſt not expect that this latter Kind of Sanctification ſhould always exert itſelf in us; that is, that

Sanctification ſhould be in the higheſt and fulleſt Degree. At firſt Grace is weak and imperfect: There are faint Diſpoſitions to it before the Habit of it. I call them *Diſpoſitions*, though I know ſome Perſons will not allow of the Word, becauſe ſay they; if Grace be by Infuſion, then it is all at once, and then there are no previous Diſpoſitions. But all that I mean is this (and I may ſafely aſſert it) that before Grace hath got a full Conqueſt over Sin, it looks more like a *Diſpoſition* than a *Habit*; and let me tell you, this is a great Truth in Divinity, that though Grace be infuſed all at once, yet it doth not *work* and *exert it ſelf* all at once. It increaſes Day by Day, it grows up by Degrees, it is at firſt like *ſmoaking Flax* or a *bruiſed Reed*, but afterwards it breaks out into a Flame and waxes ſtronger and ſtronger. It is weak and faint, feeble and infirm at the Beginning: Be not diſcouraged then if your Sanctification be imperfect. St. *Peter* informs us that in Chriſtianity there are *new-born Babes*, 1 Pet. ii. 2. There is a great Variety and Difference in the Meaſures of Grace which we receive in this Life. So that if ſome Saints be compared with others, or with themſelves at ſeveral Times, they may be call'd *Children* and others *ſtrong Men*. Hence the Apoſtle in *Heb.* v. 13. diſtinguiſhes between *Babes* and thoſe that are *of full Age*. The higheſt Degree of Holineſs that can be attain'd to in this preſent Life, is but an Eſſay and Beginning of that entire and perfect Holineſs which the other State is capable of. This is ſtiled by the ſame Apoſtle *a perfect Man*, and *the Meaſure of the Stature of the Fulneſs of Chriſt*, Eph. iv. 13. This compleat Holineſs we may breath after here, but it is the Attainment only of that State of Bleſſedneſs which is to come. But it is the former Kind of Sanctification, (*viz.* that which is imperfect and hath its Defects) that I am treating of at this Time. Your Sanctification is according to your Condition and State in this Life, that is, it is not compleat and entire: But what it wants in Degrees and Proportions you muſt make up in Sincerity. Though it be defective, yet it muſt be real and true, hearty and unfeigned.

BUT ſtill to give a further Account of this weighty Matter, I will inſiſt in the next Place on thoſe two eſſential Parts of Sanctification, viz. *Mortification* and *Vivification*: For that is the uſual and receiv'd Diſtinction, made uſe of by the beſt Divines when they treat on this Subject. And this Diſtinction is the more obſervable becauſe it is founded on direct Words of Scripture. Sundry Places mention theſe two, *Dying unto Sin*, and *Living unto Righteouſneſs*. The firſt Part of Sanctification is expreſs'd by Dying, by being mortified. Thoſe that are ſanctified are ſaid to be *dead with Chriſt*, *Col.* ii. 20. And in Gal. v. 24. *They that are Chriſt's* (that is, they that are truly holy) *have crucified the Fleſh with the Affections and Luſts*. And how often do you read of *Dying unto Sin*, which is no other than ſpiritual Mortification, ſubduing and ſlaying our Vices, ſuppreſſing our unlawful Deſires and Appetites, curbing our exorbitant Inclinations? And the 2d Part of Sanctification is expreſs'd in Scripture by *Living*, and *Riſing from the dead*. [*God, who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in Sins, hath quickned us together with Chriſt, and hath raiſed us up together.*] Eph. ii v. 6. So in Col. ii. 12. the Saints are ſaid [*to be buried with Chriſt in Baptiſm wherein alſo they are riſen with him*]. And in ſeveral Places of the New Teſtament you will find that both theſe (Mortification and Vivification) are coupled together. Thus in the whole 6th Chap. of the Epiſtle to the *Romans*, Theſe two are purpoſely treated of, particularly in the 4th, 5, and 6 v. *Like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the Glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in Newneſs of Life. For if we have been planted together in the Likeneſs of his Death, we ſhall be alſo in the Likeneſs of his Reſurrection, knowing this that our old Man is crucified with him, that the Body of Sin may be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve Sin*]. And again, v. 8. [*Now if we be dead with Chriſt, we believe that we ſhall alſo live with him*]. And v. 11. [*Reckon yourſelves to be dead unto Sin*, and *alive unto God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*]. And ſome have interpreted thoſe Words in *Romans* viii. 10. to this Purpoſe, [*The Body is dead becauſe of Sin, but the Spirit is Life becauſe of Righteouſneſs*]. But though thoſe Words, it is probable, look another Way, yet what you read in *Gal.* ii. 20. is directly to our preſent Buſineſs. [*I am* *crucified*, ſaith he, *with Chriſt* (there is his Mortification): *Nevertheleſs I live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me, and the Life I now live, I live by the Faith of the Son of God*]: There's his Vivification. Thus after the Apoſtle had ſaid in *Col.* iii. 3. [*Ye are dead*] that is, to Sin and to the World, he immediately adds, [*and your Life is hid with Chriſt in God*]: That expreſſes their Newneſs of Life.

THIS is that which the ſame Apoſtle means in *Phil.* iii. 10. by being [*made Conformable to Chriſt's death*], (that ſpeaks the 1ſt Part of Sanctification, *viz.* Mortification) and [*by knowing the Power of Chriſt's Reſurrection*] (that denotes our Riſing to Newneſs of Life): The other great Apoſtle joyns both theſe together, (1 Pet. ii. 24.) [*He bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree, that we being dead to Sin, ſhould live to Righteouſneſs*]. I will mention another Place of the ſame Apoſtle 1 Pet. iv. 1, 2. [*For as much as Chriſt hath ſuffer'd for us in the Fleſh, arm your ſelves likewiſe with the ſame Mind, for he that hath ſuffer'd in the Fleſh*, (that is, he that is crucified with Chriſt) *hath ceaſed from Sin, that he no longer ſhould live the Reſt of his Time in the Fleſh, to the Luſts of Men, but to the Will of God.*] You may eaſily obſerve here theſe two Parts of Sanctification: We muſt not only lay aſide our Vices, *ceaſe from Sin*, but we muſt take up the contrary Virtues, we muſt *live unto God*, and do Acts of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs.

THAT this is the true and right Method which we are to obſerve, is manifeſt from theſe following Particulars.

Firſt, THAT may be ſeen in the *Diviſion* of the divine Commands which are twofold, negative and affirmative, or bidding and forbidding. Accordingly there muſt needs be two Parts of Righteouſneſs, *viz.* Eſchewing Evil which anſwers to the negative Commands, and doing Good, which anſwers to the affirmative.

Secondly, THIS is contain'd in the Character which is given of the godly Man, he is deſcribed thus in *Pſalm* i. 1, 2. he is one that *walks not in the Counſel of the Ungodly*, &c. *but his Delight is in the Law of the Lord*; as much as to ſay, he leaves off Evil, and exerciſes himſelf in that which is Good.

Thirdly, THIS is the Order of *David*'s Prayer, *Turn away mine Eyes from beholding Vanity*, and then *quicken thou me in thy Law*, Pſal. cxix. 30. enliven me in the Practice of it, when I have bid adieu to the Luſts and Vanities of the World.

Fourthly, THIS is obſerv'd in the ſacred Exhortations of Scripture. *Ceaſe to do Evil, learn to do Well*, Iſai. i. 16. *Let the wicked forſake his Way; and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord*, Iſai. lv. 7. ſo in the new Teſtament, *Be not conformed to this World, but be ye transformed by the Renewing of your Minds*, Romans xii. 2. *Let us caſt off the Works of Darkneſs, and put on the Armour of Light*, Rom. xiii. 12. *Let us cleanſe ourſelves from all Filthineſs of the Fleſh and Spirit, perfecting Holineſs in the Fear of God*, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Here are the *Purgation* and *Perfection* which the chriſtian Philoſophy commends to us, and that muſt always go firſt, and precede this.

ON which Occaſion I cannot but take Notice that even among the *Pythagoreans*, true Philoſophy was defined * the *Purgation* and *Perfection of Man's Life*. The former (they held) makes way for the latter: One takes away the Defilements and Dregs of Vice, the other adds the divine Nature and Likeneſs. *Socrates* (who in moſt Things followed *Pythagoras*) was wont to aſſert and defend this *purgative* Part of Philoſophy, and to ſhew the Uſefulneſs and Neceſſity of it, and therefore gained the Epithet of *Cathartick*, as † *Euſebius* tells us; much more then the two main Things in *Chriſtianity* are Purging and Perfecting: Firſt we muſt cleanſe our Natures and Lives, and then we muſt ſtrive to make them compleat by poſitive Acts of Virtue and Holineſs. The Apoſtle keeps this order when he bids the Epheſians *put off concerning the former Converſation the old Man which is corrupt according to the deceitful Luſts, and be renewed in the Spirit of their Minds, and put on the new Man, which after God is created in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs.* The like he ſaith in *Col.* iii. 9. And St. *Peter*'s Exhortations run in the ſame Manner, *viz.* that we ſhould *eſchew Evil, and do Good*, 1 Pet. iii. 11. And the ſame Order he had obſerved in Chap i. 14, 15, *v.*

Fifthly, THIS is the Method deſign'd in the Promiſes of the Goſpel, 2 Pet. i. 4. *That by theſe we might be Partakers of the divine Nature, having firſt eſcaped the Corruption that is in the World thro' Luſt.*

Sixthly

* ζωῆς ἀνθρωπίνης κάθαρσις ϗ τελειότης Hierocl.

† Chronicon.

Sixthly, THIS is implied in the Notion of *Repentance*, which is the grand Duty of our Lives. This is firſt a Turning from Sin, and then a Turning to God. Both theſe are abſolutely requiſite, and the one is a neceſſary Antecedent of the other. Our Repentance ought to be according to our Method of Sinning; now this generally proceeds after this Manner; Sins of Omiſſion make Way for Sins of Commiſſion: Firſt the good which is commanded is not done: And then the Evil which is forbidden, is done, Jer. ii. 13. *They have committed two Evils, they have forſaken me the Fountain of living Waters, and* hew'd *them out Ciſterns, broken Ciſterns, that can hold no Water.* Theſe are two diſtinct Acts; and ſo muſt our Acts of *Repentance* be, firſt Forſaking of Sin, and ſecondly Cleaving unto God.

Seventhly, THE Method of Holineſs ſhould anſwer to the *Way of Salvation*; which is firſt *negative*, or a Reſcuing a Man from Hell and Damnation which he might juſtly have ſuffer'd, and then alſo *poſitive*, or a Beſtowing of actual Glory and Heaven upon him. This Order of Man's Sanctification and God's ſaving him ſeems to be expreſs'd by thoſe Words of the Apoſtle in *Acts* xxvi. 18. where the grand Deſign of the Goſpel is ſet down, and the Method of Repentance and Salvation, namely, *to turn Men from Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God, that they may receive Forgiveneſs of Sins, and Inheritance among them which are ſanctified.* The former Clauſe expreſſes the two Parts of *Repentance* or *Holineſs*, *viz.* Turning from Darkneſs or the Power of Satan, and Turning unto God who is Light. And then the latter Part of the Words ſets forth the Order of *Salvation*, viz. the Deliverance from Hell by the Forgiveneſs of our Sins which merited no leſs, and the actual Conferring of an heavenly Inheritance upon us.

Eighthly, and *Laſtly*, IN the Nature of the Thing itſelf this muſt be ſo: For evil Habits cannot be left ſo ſoon, as to ſtep preſently into the contrary Habits of Virtue and Grace; but by Degrees the former Habits are to be thrown off, and ſo it muſt be a particular Work to do this effectually. Therefore the Caſting off of Sin, is neceſſary in order to the Introducing of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, and there is an utter Impoſſibility in the Thing itſelf (in the *uſual* and *ordinary* Way) that it ſhould be otherwiſe. The Abandoning of Sin muſt needs be the firſt Step to the Practice of Holineſs: And both theſe make up compleat Holineſs and Goodneſs; for, according to the Apoſtle, we are not only to *deny Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts*, but to *live ſoberly, righteouſly and godlily.*

SUFFER me, before I quit this Head of my Diſcourſe, to draw theſe two Inferences from it. If it be thus, then I infer

Firſt, THAT a negative Holineſs, a blank Virtue (as I may ſo call it) will not ſuffice us to Salvation. It is not enough to abſtain from the Commiſſion of Evil, and to ſhun the Occaſions of it, but we are oblig'd to do and perform that which is Good, and to take all Opportunities of doing ſo. It is the Plea of many Perſons that they are not Drunkards, nor Whoremongers, nor Swearers; they ſay they commit none of theſe and other notorious Sins; they carefully refrain from the Vices and Enormities which other Mens Lives are generally ſtained with; and this they think is acceptable to God, and is as much as they need plead for themſelves another Day. But this is a very groſs Miſtake, and they will find it to be ſuch, if they do not ſpeedily correct it. That they may do ſo, let them conſider that there are Affirmatives, as well as Negatives in Religion. *They that are in Chriſt Jeſus, walk not after the Fleſh*, the Apoſtle tells us; but that is not enough, there is ſomething poſitive required of them, therefore he adds, that they actually *walk after the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 1. The Grace that bringeth Salvation, teacheth them not only to deny their Luſts, but to live in Oppoſition to them.

Secondly, HENCE we are aſſured of the Truth of what our Saviour ſaith, that *no Man can ſerve two Maſters*, that it is impoſſible to ſerve God and Mammon, to be Servants of Chriſt and our Luſts together. There being two contrary Principles of our Actions, we cannot at the ſame time be in Obedience to both. In vain doth that Man talk of the *Spirit* and its *Government* over him, who ſuffereth himſelf to be led and acted by the *Fleſh*, and the evil Motions thereof. Light and Darkneſs, Chriſt and *Belial* will not ſtand together: Thou *muſt love the one. and hate the other*; *thou muſt* neceſſarily *cleave to one, and forſake the other.* Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts are inconſiſtent with living ſoberly, ly, righteouſly, and godlily. Aſſure thy ſelf of this great Truth, that ſo thou mayſt not (as many do) deceive thy ſelf, and hazard thy eternal Welfare. Remember what the Apoſtle ſuggeſts, *Rom.* vi. 18. that we muſt be *made free from Sin*, before we *become the Servants of Righteouſneſs*. We muſt give a Bill of Divorce to this World, before we be betrothed to that World which is to come, as * the *Hebrew Doctors* have expreſſed it. We muſt renounce our worldly Luſts, that we may live in Compliance with the Laws of Heaven.

* *Libellus repudii hujuſce mundi, mundo futuro ſponſaliorum loco eſt.* Jud. Prov.

THUS you ſee in general, what are the two Parts of Sanctification, namely, *Dying unto Sin*, and *Living unto Righteouſneſs:* And it is impoſſible, that the latter ſhould be accompliſhed without the former. For as it is in natural Things, which our Saviour takes Notice of in *John* xii. 24. *Except a Corn of Wheat fall into the Ground, and die, it bringeth not forth Fruit*; ſo 'tis true even in Things ſpiritual: Dying precedes Living: Dying to Sin is the Forerunner of our Living to God. The ſame Spirit which mortifieth us to a carnal Life, quickens us to a ſpiritual One: But *Mortification* is ever *before Vivification*. And being before it I intend to inſiſt upon that firſt. For having ſpoken of both *jointly*, I will now treat of them *ſeparately* and *diſtinctly*, and ſhew the full Extent of them.

AND firſt, as to *Mortification*, we muſt know that it is not a bare Abandoning of Sin, but it is alſo a Subduing the Power of it: And therefore it is appoſitely ſtiled a *Deſtroying the Body of Sin*, Rom. vi. 6. Then we are deſervedly ſaid to die to Sin, when the Power and Strength of Sin are taken away: When Sin languiſhes and decays, and at laſt dies. (*Mortifie your Members which are upon the Earth*, Col. iii. 5.) put to Death your Members, ſo it is in the *Greek:* Slay and diſpatch your ſelves. It ſeems at firſt to be a ſtrange Piece of Advice, and not to ſavour of the apoſtolical Spirit. Would St. *Paul* have the *Coloſſians* make themſelves away? Muſt a Chriſtian be *felo de ſe?* What doth the Apoſtle mean by *killing the Members?* Some think it is a Metaphor taken from the Art of *Chirurgery*, which teaches the Profeſſors of it to deaden thoſe Parts and Members which they intend to cut off, for Mortification of the Part is in order for Amputation. And accordingly the Apoſtle applies it here, *mortifie* (ſaith he) *your Members*: That the whole Body of Sin (for 'tis often call'd a *Body*, and Sin the *old Man* by our Apoſtle) may be deſtroy'd; begin firſt to mortifie ſome of its Members, ſtupifie and deaden them, take off their Senſe and Deſire towards ſinful Objects, render them wholly unactive and unable.

OR, perhaps the Apoſtle (who borrows ſeveral Metaphors from the old Laws, and the Moſaical Uſages) takes this from thence. God commanded the *Jews* to kill certain Beaſts every Day (yea every Morning and Evening) and to offer them up to him by way of Sacrifices. Now likewiſe under the Goſpel there are ſpiritual Sacrifices and Oblations: Here muſt be Killing and Slaying: And the Killing of Beaſts under the Law did ſhadow forth, not only Chriſt's Death, but the Death of our Sins. It ſhew'd what *we* are to do, *viz.* to mortifie, to kill our Luſts and ſinful Affections, and to offer up ourſelves a Sacrifice unto God. *Firſt*, Suppreſs the carnal Principle within you, the Spawn of Sin, the Fuel of Luſts, which is call'd moſt commonly in the Scripture the *Fleſh*, either becauſe it was congenite with our Fleſh; it was in us as ſoon as we had Bodies: Or, 2*ly*, Becauſe it is as near and dear to Sinners, as their very Fleſh: Or, 3*ly*, Becauſe it will not quite leave us, till we quit the Fleſh. But in the mean time, we muſt endeavour to ſuppreſs and ſubdue it, to tame and mortifie it. True Mortification begins with the inbred Luſt, the fleſhly Principle, it lays the Ax to the Root, it purges the Heart and Conſcience. Beſides, our more *particular* Corruptions, and unlawful Deſires, are thoſe Members, which we ought to ſlay.

AND not only theſe are here underſtood but all *outward Acts* of Sin, call'd *the Works of the Fleſh*. Obſerve the Apoſtle's Words in *Rom.* viii. 13. [*If ye mortify the Deeds of the Body, ye ſhall live*]. Whence it is eaſy to infer what the Apoſtle means by *mortifying our Members*: He explains himſelf here, telling us, that the *Deeds of the Body*, that is, our ſinful Actions and Behaviour, are thoſe *Members*. And theſe we muſt firſt kill, and then ſacrifice them to God. This I take to be the true Explication of the Metaphor or Similitude, which the Apoſtle makes Uſe of.

AND indeed you may obſerve, that he is often delighted with this Way of ſpeaking: *Killing*, *Mortifying*, *Crucifying* are frequently applied by him to this Purpoſe. But let the laſt of theſe (*viz. Crucifying*) take up your Thoughts at preſent; and take Notice how particularly the Apoſtle applies this. As in *Gal.* ii. 20. [*I am crucified with Chriſt*]: And again [*They that are Chriſt's* (ſaith he) *have crucified the Fleſh with the Affections and Luſts*], Gal. v. 24. And again, Gal. vi. 14. [*By Chriſt the World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World*]. And ſo in *Rom.* vi. 6. [*our old Man is crucified with Chriſt*]. You ſee that the Apoſtle is pleas'd with this Metaphor: His frequent Uſing it is a Proof thereof. And you ſee that as Chriſt was crucified for us, ſo we are to crucify our Luſts for his Sake. Chriſt's Crucifixion makes way for our Crucifixion. It is plain that there is ſuch a thing in Chriſtianity, as a being crucified with Chriſt. And this the Apoſtle calls in an other Place [*being planted with him in the Likeneſs of his Death.*] Rom. vi. 5. As much as to ſay, there muſt be a Likeneſs, a Reſemblance between Chriſt's Death and our Dying to Sin. Chriſt's Death is to be a Pattern for us. We muſt die as well as he. And we muſt die the very particular Death that he did. We muſt be crucified; you ſee the Apoſtle urges this very thing in ſundry places: And he intends thereby that Chriſt's Crucifixion (I take it in *the largeſt* Senſe) ſhould be an Emblem and Repreſentation of our crucifying the Fleſh. Let then the ſeveral Circumſtances and Paſſages appertaining to Chriſt's Crucifixion be imitated in our crucifying of Sin. Deal in all particulars with your ſinful ſelves, as the barbarous *Jews* did with Chriſt. Let this be diſcovered in the following particulars, *viz.* in *Apprehending*, *Arraigning*, *Condemning*, *Putting to Shame*, *Executing*. A Word of each.

Firſt, IN order to the crucifying of your Sins, *apprehend* them; Chriſt *was laid hold on*; you muſt do the ſame on your Sins. Arreſt your ſelves, ſtop the Career, ſtand ſtill: This is the firſt Attempt you muſt make againſt your Sins; and without this it is impoſſible you ſhould ever effect any Thing conſiderable againſt your wicked Lives. When Sinners run on with full Speed in the Ways of Iniquity, and proſecute their Luſts with Eagerneſs and Greedineſs, and will not liſten to the Voice of Heaven when it bids them quit their evil Ways, and return to the Paths of Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs, when it is thus with Sinners, it cannot be expected that they ſhould reform and amend, that they ſhould be acquainted with the Work of Mortification, or dying unto Sin. No, there is nothing to be done as long as you are in your eager Perſuit. Therefore pauſe a while, ſuffer yourſelves as it were to be *laid hold on* and *apprehended:* Stop your Motion, and go no further. And then when you have brought yourſelves to this Bay, when you have ſtopt your Progreſs in Vice, you are in a fit Poſture to conſider your Ways, and to ask your ſelves what you have done.

WHICH is the 2d thing you are to undertake, *viz.* to *arraign* yourſelves for your Sins. Chriſt was haled into the Places of publick *Judicature*, he appear'd in the High-Prieſt's Hall, he was brought before the Judges, he was accuſed examined and tried before *Pilate* In Imitation of which you muſt ſet up a Tribunal, and try and arraign yourſelves. Search your Hearts and Ways, rifle your Conſciences; and theſe (I mean your Conſciences) will be very ſenſible at the Trial; for they will be inſtead of a 1000 Witneſſes. They will lay open your Follies, they will impartially diſcover your Guilt. Suffer them but to ſpeak, and they will teſtify againſt you. By their Help you may throughly examine your Ways, and call yourſelves to an Account, and pry into the moſt ſecret Receſſes and Retirements of your Souls.

3*dly*, CHRIST had the *Sentence of Death paſſed upon him* by the *Judge*. Thus likewiſe muſt you deal with your Sins. Let *Judgment paſs* againſt them: Freely *Condemn* yourſelves for your Evil-doings. When you have, upon Search and Trial, found yourſelves guilty, what remains but that you ſhould perform this Task? And to incourage you to the Performance of it, let it be remember'd that if you condemn yourſelves, you ſhall thereby eſcape the Condemnation of God. Self-condemnation will keep you from being condemned by the great Judge of all the World. Be not backward then to this Part of your Duty, but do it with Freedom and Willingneſs. Shew no Pity in this Caſe, be bold and courageous, let not Favour or Affection ſway you: Attend not to the cries of a deluded Conſcience, liſten not to the Intreaties of thoſe who have been Companions with you in Sin. Hearken not to the Sollicitations and Inveiglements of Satan, but manfully

fully diſcharge this Office, paſs Sentence of Condemnation on your Sins, and ſhew no Remorſe for doing ſo.

4thly, REMEMBER that Chriſt was *affronted*, and *mocked*, and *put to open Shame.* Be you aſhamed and confounded for your Iniquities. Bluſh at the Remembrance of them, let Confuſion of Face ſeize upon you: Hide your Heads, and be abaſhed at the Sight of your Sins.

5thly, and laſtly, HASTEN away theſe Malefactors to *Execution.* You know of whom the *Jews* cried out, *Away with him, away with him, crucify him, crucify him*: And accordingly they hurried him away to Mount *Calvary*, and there erected a Croſs, and faſtned him thereon, and put him to Death. Let your Sins fare thus: Away with them, crucify them, execute them, put them to Death. We read that Saul was commanded to ſlay all the *Amalekites* ſmall and great, and to ſpare nothing, neither Man nor Beaſt: But he ſpared *Agag*, and the fatteſt and beſt of the Cattle. In a reſembling Manner, we are commanded to mortify, to crucify, to kill our Luſts: But we (notwithſtanding that) ſpare and reſerve ſome of them, we keep and retain ſome choice and beloved Vices, and will not let them go: But this is a poſitive violating of the divine Command. We muſt not be merciful to our Sins: We muſt hew *Agag* in Pieces, we muſt bring out our Sins to Execution, we muſt ſlay and deſtroy them. Many deal with their Sins as *Pilate* at firſt did with Chriſt, [*I will ſcourge him* (ſaith he) *and let him go*]. They will correct themſelves for their Miſdoings; they will not deny to give their Vices a Laſh: But they will by no means be perſuaded to crucify them, to inflict the utmoſt Puniſhment, to kill and diſpatch them. But this you muſt do if would attain to that Part of Sanctification which is call'd *Mortification*, or Dying to Sin. The Apoſtle tells you once and again that you muſt be crucified with Chriſt. As he was crucified, ſo you muſt be: And you may learn from the *Manner* of Chriſt's Crucifixion how to crucify your Sins.

YOU muſt be *nailed to the Croſs*, as our Saviour was: You muſt be fixed and faſtened by holy Reſolution, by firm Purpoſes, Vows and Promiſes, by ardent and earneſt Prayer, by religious Faſting and Abſtinence, by Watchfulneſs and Sobriety, by great Care and Caution, by a holy Fear and Dread. Fetch a Nail out of the Holy Scripture, out of the Word of God, and drive it in faſt by a diligent Reading, by attentive Hearing, and by ſerious Meditating and Pondering. For thoſe *Words of the Wiſe* (as *Solomon* ſaith) *are like Nails faſtned by the Maſters of Aſſemblies*, Eccl. xii. 11. St. *Paul*, ſaith he, *bare in his Body the Marks of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; his Sufferings for Chriſt were viſible and apparent. Can'ſt thou ſhew the Marks of thy Crucifixion? Doth it appear to all that ſee thee, that thou art crucified unto the World, and the World unto thee? Doſt thou give any Evidences of thy leaving thy Sins, and mortifying thy Luſts? What Signs and Tokens are there of thy abandoning thy evil Ways? I will comprize all in theſe three Particulars; *Crucifying* is a painful Death; a ſhameful Death; A lingering Death. Your Crucifying of your Sins muſt be ſuch.

Firſt, I SAY, *Crucifying* is a Death which is accompanied with *great Pain* and *Torture.* The Extending and Stretching out the Limbs on the Croſs, and the Nailing of the Hands and Feet to it muſt needs be of this Nature. And therefore 'tis probable that with reſpect to this dolorous Sort of Suffering, *Peter* ſpoke thoſe Words to our Saviour, [*Maſter ſpare thy ſelf*]. If thou can'ſt, I beſeech thee favour thy ſelf in this Caſe, and do not undergo ſo *painful* a Suffering. Now it is certain that the ſpiritual Crucifixion is attended with a greater Pain, and a more poignant Grief. Under the Senſe of this the Apoſtle cried out moſt paſſionately, *Oh wretched Man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this Body of Death?* Who ſhall reſcue me from my Sins, which are a heavy Load, heavier than I am able to bear? And yet it is heavy and burdenſom, troubleſom and afflictive to be rid of it. It is no eaſy Task to ſubdue the Fleſh; it is a difficult Enterprize to root out old Habits of Sin, to extirpate inveterate Luſts, to renounce thoſe Vices, and Follies which Men have been accuſtomed to, and are in Love with. Fleſh and Blood recoil at the ſevere Duties of Mortification and Self-denial.

2dly, *CRUCIFYING* is a *ſhameful Death.* It was the moſt ignominious Way of dying that was inflicted among the *Romans*, (for the *Jews* borrowed it from them, they having no ſuch Puniſhment of their own, as the *Hebrew* Doctors acquaint us) and therefore the *Romans* uſed to put their vileſt *Slaves* and *Vaſſals* to this kind of Death, becauſe it was ſo reproachful a Way of Dying. Be it known to you that the ſpiritual Crucifixion is as ſhameful and ignominious in the World's Eye: A mortified Perſon is reproached and reviled: He that is ſevere to his Sins is mocked and laught at: A ſtrict and blameleſs Life is derided. You read in the evangelical Hiſtory that whilſt our Saviour hung upon the Croſs, his Adverſaries *ſcoffed at him, and wagged their Heads at him,* and moſt unworthily affronted and abuſed him. This is the Caſe of that Man who crucifies his Sins: They that paſs by make him the Object of their Deriſion and Scorn. If he keeps himſelf unſpotted from the World, and ſhuns thoſe Wickedneſſes which others generally practice, he is repreſented as a vile and contemptible Creature, he hath ſome bad Name fixed upon him, and that he is known by, and by reaſon of that he meets with Obloquy and Reproach. But let not ſuch a one be diſheartned: Let him with his Maſter Chriſt Jeſus indure the Croſs, and deſpiſe the Shame: Yea, let him think it *no Shame*, but his *Glory*, to meet with ſuch Uſage from the World, and let him eſteem Sin only to be ſhameful, vile, and ignominious here, and that which will cauſe eternal Shame and Confuſion hereafter.

3dly, CRUCIFYING is a *lingering Death.* There being in the Execution of that Puniſhment no preſent Suffocation of the Spirits, and no immediate Violence offer'd to the vital Parts of the Body: But through long and tedious Pain, and Loſs of Blood the Malefactors at laſt expire their Breath. Thus the infallible Records acquaint us that our Saviour was on the Croſs from the ninth to the third Hour, *i. e.* no leſs then Six Hours; and he had not given up the Ghoſt then neither if a Soldier had not peirced his Heart with his Spear, and ſo opened a Paſſage for his Soul to go out at. By this you perceive it was a lingering and tedious Sort of Death which the crucified Perſons ſuffer'd. The Death of Sin is ſuch likewiſe. Sin is not deſtroyed of a ſudden: It is not diſpatched preſently; it is a conſiderable Space of Time before it expires; you will fell abundant Pain, you will undergo great Agonies, you will experience many Tortures before your Sins leave you. It was the Emperor *Caligula's* Command generally to the Executioner, ſo to ſtrike the Malefactor that *he might feel himſelf die.* You will have the Experience of ſomething of the like Nature; you muſt be tortured by by piece-meals, you muſt not die at once: Your Sins will expire by Degrees. In brief, you muſt die daily, that ye may not die eternally.

AND thus I have briefly ſhew'd you the Anology and Reſemblance between *Chriſt's Crucifying* and *Ours*, between his Suffering on the Croſs and our Dying to Sin. A *Papiſt* is ſondly addicted to his Crucifix, and hath that often before his Eyes: But I am ſure that this Repreſentation which I have given you of Chriſt's Crucifying and Ours, will be really advantageous to you, and if you frequently think of it, it will be ſerviceable to the Salvation of your immortal Souls.

THAT it may really prove to be ſo, I will *apply* all that I have ſaid. And I will compriſe all in theſe three Inferences, 1. Be thoroughly perſuaded of this great Truth. 2. Examine whether you have had any Experience of it in your Hearts and Lives. 3dly and laſtly, Set about this Work in good earneſt; mortify and crucify your Luſts.

FIRST, I ſay, be thoroughly perſuaded of this great and important Truth, *viz.* that Mortifying and Crucifying of Sin is one eſſential Part of *Sanctification*, and that it is indiſpenſably required of us. Every Thing in Chriſtianity is powerful and operative. There is Power and Virtue in all Chriſt's Undertakings, but eſpecially in his *Death.* By his Death we are to take an Example of dying. It was a common Tradition among the antient Fathers (and *Athanaſius*, *Cyprian Ambroſe*, *Auſtin* in particular do give credit to it) that *Adam* was *buried* on Mount *Calvary*, the Place where *Chriſt* was *crucifyed.* I am apt to believe that this only ſerves in a pious Way, to repreſent the *Affinity* between *Chriſt's Death* and *our ſpiritual Dying.* There is Energy and Efficacy in his Death and Crucifixion to promote the Crucifying of our Sins. Take this for a Maxim, what Chriſt hath done for us, that he will do in us. He was *born* for us; and if we be regenerate, he is born in us. He *roſe* from the dead for us; and if we be true Believers, he will ſhew the Efficacy of his Riſing in us: He *aſcended* to Heaven for us; and if we belong to him, he will diſcover the Virtue of his Aſcenſion in us; that is, we ſhall ſeek thoſe things which are above, we ſhall breathe after Heaven and future Glory. And, which is moſt pertinent to our preſent Purpoſe, he *died* for us, and he will likewiſe manifeſt the Power of his Death in us by helping us to mortify and crucify our Sins and vile Affections. Whereſoever there is true Sanctification, there is a Renouncing of the Works of Darkneſs, a Farewel given to the World ſo far as it is vitious and corrupted. All holy Men by the Influence and Efficacy of Chriſt's Death, and the Operation of the Holy Spirit, are enabled to mortify the Deeds of the Fleſh, and ſo every Day Sin dies in them, and they to Sin. This is Part of the Character of a holy Man: And therefore perſuade yourſelves of the Truth and Reality of it.

Secondly, EXAMINE and try whether you have mortify'd your Sins. And to aſſiſt you in your Search and Examination, you may make Uſe of theſe four Signs. If you are dead to Sin, if you are crucified to the World, you may know it by ſuch Evidences as theſe.

1. IF you are *dead*, you'll be *unactive:* Look into the Graves, and ſee how ſtill and ſilent thoſe Inhabitants lie there. They don't ſcuffle for Dignity and high Degrees, they are content with their low Situation, and are not angry that they are thruſt under Ground. They are not proud and inſulting, for they ſuffer any one to trample on them: The Worms they converſe with will ſooner turn again than they, if you tread upon them. It is juſt thus in ſome Proportion with the Perſon that is *ſpiritually dead*, and hath mortified the Deeds of the Fleſh: None, or very little Motion and Stirring is to be perceiv'd in him. Whereas before he was buſy and active, eager and hot in Perſuit of the World and all ſenſual Vanities, now he finds himſelf cold and benummed, dull and heavy: He ſits ſtill, and lets the vain World buſy and tire itſelf in their fond Enterprizes.

2dly, IF you are dead, your *Joys* and *Delights will die* alſo. Thoſe that are dead are not affected with corporeal Pleaſures, they are not taken with delightful Objects, be they ſet never ſo near to them; they are not tranſported with the moſt exquiſite Muſick and ſweeteſt Harmony; they are not refreſhed with Odours and Perfumes; their Palates cannot reliſh the moſt delicate Fare. In a reſembling Sort, thoſe that are *dead to Sin*, have their Minds and Affections alienated from the Love of earthly Things. They find not that Guſt and Reliſh in them which the vitiated Appetites of the unregenerate are wont to do. It is true, Sin is not utterly aboliſhed in them; Pollution adheres to the moſt refined Souls, and will never be wholly eradicated in this Life. Tho' it be crucified here, yet it gives not up the Ghoſt till we do: It receives its Death-wound now, but expires not till we breathe our laſt. Yet even here the Delight and Pleaſure in Sin is taken away. A mortified Man ſins not with Satisfaction and Complacency. There cannot be a greater Evidence then this that Sin hath receiv'd its mortal Wound, and that we are dead to it.

3dly, IF you are dead, you are *inſenſible*. The luſtful Eye and Ear, and all the other Inlets of Senſe, ſo far as they are ſerviceable to Sin and Vanity, are locked up. Moreover the mortified Man is inſenſible in another Reſpect: He hears not, he minds not the Scoffs and Reproaches of wicked Men: He is not concerned at the ill Language or the worſer Uſage which he finds from the World! He goes on in his Journey, and ſtays not to obſerve the Barking of every ſnarling Animal: He is regardleſs of the Frowns as well as the Smiles and Flatteries of Men. But though he is thus *inſenſible*, yet

4ly, HE ſhews that Sin is dead in him, by his *accounting it a heavy and uneaſy Burden*. He is not ſo inſenſible, but that he feels Sin, and hath a Senſe of his Failings. For this is an undeniable Propoſition, when Sin is mortified it grows burdenſom and uneaſy. Our living Members are not troubleſom to us, but dead and wither'd ones are, and they moleſt and clog us exceſſively. Theſe troubleſom Solicitations of Sin made the choſen Veſſel (as you heard before) complain and cry out, *O wretched Man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this Body of Death.* This is his doleful Language, *who will deliver me?* He ſeems to be in his Priſon and Fetters at *Rome*, where *Nero* ſhut him up, though he was not ſo indeed at this Time: But he never cried out ſo paſſionately of his Impriſonment and Durance, as he doth of his Sin, his Body of Death. This then is one Sign of that Mortification of Sin, which we are capable of arriving to in this preſent State, *viz.* that we feel the Motions of it with Diſlike and Abhorrence, with Loathing and Deteſtation, when no vitious Thought is entertain'd, or Act committed without Regret and Remorſe. Thus you may try, whether you are dead to Sin, whether you are mortified Perſons.

But I proceed to the 3*d* and *laſt* Inference, which is this; Set about this Work in good Earneſt; mortify, crucify your Sins. You muſt uſe them unkindly, if you expect Kindneſs and Favour from God. Shew yourſelves Enemies to them on all Occaſions. Execute theſe Malefactors, deſtroy them, kill them, crucify them: But you'll ask me, how this is to be done? I will ſet you into a plain and direct Way to diſcharge this neceſſary Duty; and pray you unto God, that he would aſſiſt you in that Way. Sin muſt be mortified,

1. By *Moderation* in the Uſe of thoſe Enjoyments and good Things of this Life, which God hath been pleaſed to vouchſafe to us. Though you have Abundance, yet wrong not yourſelves by it: [*Eat not too much Honey*] ſaith the wiſe Man. Which we may apply thus, We muſt not glut ourſelves with the Sweets and Delicacies of the World, we muſt not indulge ourſelves in an immoderate, and undue Uſe of the Creature and Comforts, which Providence hath bleſſed us with. Mortification muſt be promoted by Sobriety and Temperance: Always remember this, that the Body ought to be a Servant to the Soul, the Fleſh muſt be obedient to the Spirit. If you would extinguiſh the Flames of Luſt and Lewdneſs, or any other inordinate Deſire, the beſt Courſe that you can take is to ſubſtract the Fewel. Be ſober and moderate.

2*dly*, That you may effectually mortify Sin, be *converſant with the Word of God.* Read and hear it often; this is *quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two edged Sword*, ſaith the Author to the *Hebrews*, ch. iv. 12. Make Uſe of this Weapon to ſlay your fleſhly Luſts: This will do it with good Succeſs; this will certainly diſcomfit and defeat the numerous Hoſts of Sin and Wickedneſs. Peruſe the Holy Book of God, and liſten to it when it is applied, and you will find Sin decreaſing in you daily; and you will be dead unto thoſe Vanities which you formerly took delight in, and could not live without. Call to mind the Pſalmiſt's Experience, *Pſalm* cxix. 11. [*Thy Word have I hid in my Heart; that I might not ſin againſt thee*]. God's Word is a Preſervative againſt Sin: If you intend to mortify this, be careful to converſe with that.

3*dly*, To Reading and Hearing add *Meditation.* Sit down, and conſider ſeriouſly: Employ yourſelves in thinking. *Plato* defines *Philoſophy*, a Meditation of Death: But by this, it is probable he means a Separation of Soul and Body by Contemplation, *viz*, when the Soul ſeems to go out of the Body, and to fix itſelf above, and to ruminate on divine and heavenly Things, and ſo as 'twere to be abſtracted from all corporeal Converſe, and have nothing to do with the fleſhly Part. This was a high Strain of that great Man; but it ought to be the Practice of every *Chriſtian.* He muſt leave this World, even whilſt he is in it: He muſt ſeparate himſelf from the Body by divine Meditation; he muſt ſoar aloft, and converſe with God and his excellent Perfections. He muſt ſtudy the divine Attributes, and ſpend his Thoughts about the Things of another World; and then this World will be deſpiſed by him, and he will laugh at all its vain Entertainments, and will not be liable to be deluded and cheated by them; and he will deem a holy and mortified Life to be the greateſt and choiceſt Pleaſure. I requeſt you to exerciſe yourſelves daily in this religious Employment of *Meditation* (and to that Purpoſe ſet ſome Hours apart, that you may be more ſolemn and ſerious in it); and you will find that this is an excellent Help to *Mortification.*

4*thly*, Let Meditation be joined with *Prayer.* If you are deſirous to ſubdue and mortifie your Luſts, crave the Help and Aid of the Almighty, according to St. *Paul*'s Example, 2 *Cor.* xii. 7, 8. [*For this Thing I beſought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me*]. And obſerve, what was the Anſwer to his Prayer, in the Verſe following, [*He* ſaid unto me, *My Grace is ſufficient for thee, for my Strength is made perfect in Weakneſs.* By an humble Addreſſing yourſelves to the God of Heaven, you derive his Grace into your Souls; and that will ſtrengthen you againſt all Infirmities, that will bear you up under all Difficulties, that will enable you to conquer all Impediments. Betake yourſelves then to the Throne of Grace, acknowledge your Weakneſs, and earneſtly implore the divine Power: When you ſee yourſelves beſet with numerous Failings and Offences, ſpread forth your Hands before God, and utter the Words of *Jehoſaphat*, [*We have no Might againſt this great Company that cometh againſt us: Neither know we what to do, but our Eyes are upon thee*]. And remember how God anſwer'd this Prayer of Humility and Faith: You read in that Hiſtory that God fought for him, and there was a wonderful Overthrow of his Enemies. In like manner your ſpiritual Enemies, your Sins and Luſts ſhall be vanquiſhed and deſtroy'd, if you continue earneſt and ſincere in your Prayer and Supplications.

5thly, *WATCH* as well as pray, and then you may aſſure yourſelves that your Luſts ſhall be mortified, your Sins ſhall expire and die. Be continually upon your Guard; have a care leſt you be ſurprized. Vigilancy and Mortification muſt go together: Watch over yourſelves, as to theſe two Things eſpecially, 1. *Beware of the Beginnings of Sin.* Let not Satan have Entrance: Give him a Repulſe at the very firſt; deny him when he craves Admiſſion into your Souls. This will be of ſingular Uſe in your Lives, and you will find the happy Reſult and Fruit of it. When Sin hath once enter'd, it is difficult to expel it; be ſo wiſe and wary therefore as to repel it at its firſt Aſſault; and by this means the Work of Mortification will be eaſy, becauſe you will have the fewer Sins to ſubdue and ſuppreſs. *2dly*, *Beware of the Occaſions of Sin*, and approach not near the Borders of it. Abſtain from the very Appearance of Evil, ſhun all the Paſſages and Avenues that ſeem to lead to it. Keep yourſelves at the greateſt Diſtance you can from Sin; come not nigh its Territories; avoid all Opportunities which may adminiſter to it. If you be thus *watchful*, you cannot miſcarry; the Conqueſt of Sin will not be difficult; and you will find your Luſts and vile Affections ſoon brought into Subjection.

6thly, BE careful that there be a *ſanctified Improvement of all your Afflictions.* This will be an effectual Way to bring you to a true Mortification: When any Sickneſs of Body, when any Diſappointment or Loſs in your Eſtate, when any Reproach or Defamation (which touches your good Name); or when any Calamity that reaches to your Relations be your Allotment; let it be your Care to reflect upon yourſelves at ſuch a Time, and to ponder the Actions of your Life, and to examine your Behaviour. Ask yourſelves theſe Queſtions; have you not abuſed your Health? Have you not employed your bodily Strength, and hale Temper to vitious and unlawful Purpoſes? Have you not miſemploy'd your Eſtate, and the good Things of this World, which God hath beſtowed upon you, to evil and wicked Deſigns? Have you not diſhonoured God with your Subſtance? Have you not made your Wealth and Riches adminiſter to your Luſts, to Pride and Vanity, and Luxury, and even a Forgetting of God? Have you not preferr'd your Name and Credit before the Honour and Glory of your Maker? Have you not prized the Applauſe and Acclamations of Men, above the Goodwill and Pleaſure of God? Have not your Friends and Relatives prevail'd with you to act againſt your Conſcience? Have not their Nearneſs and Alliance invited you to forſake your Duty, to comply with ſinful Propoſals?

WHEN you have put theſe Queſtions to yourſelves, then demand an Anſwer to them: And thereby you will perceive whether your *Afflictions* (as to thoſe forenamed Inſtances) are the immediate Effect and Reſult of your particular Miſcarriages. And if you find that they are ſo (as 'tis very likely they are) you know what you have to do. Firſt, You muſt bewail your Folly, you muſt acknowledge the Hand of God ſtretched out againſt you, you muſt ſee and diſcern your particular Sins in your particular Afflictions and Puniſhments. You muſt in the next Place, abandon thoſe particular Sins and Offences, and thank God that he hath ſhew'd you your Failings in your Sufferings. You muſt more eſpecially mortify thoſe Sins, which you diſcover to be the Riſe and Root of your Afflictions. Strike at thoſe Follies which you find to be the peculiar Cauſe of ſuch Calamities. In brief, let all the croſs Accidents, Diſtreſſes, and Difficulties of this Life be duly weighed and conſider'd by you, that no Evil or Puniſhment may befal you, but what is ſerviceable to the expelling the Evil of Sin. Let all Corrections and Chaſtiſements remind you of your Diſobedience, which is the Procurer of them. Thus there will be a bleſſed Effect and Iſſue of all Afflictions, which are your Portion in this World. And whereas Sin is the Cauſe of Sufferings, ſering, and the Source of all Calamities, you will experience that thoſe Sufferings and Calamities deſtroy Sin. This is another Expedient you may uſe for the mortifying of your Sins.

7thly, and *Laſtly*, HAVE Recourſe unto the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt, by whom alone all Sin is expiated and atoned. All that I have ſaid is inſignificant and uſeleſs, unleſs you make Uſe of this Remedy for this mortifying of your Sins. If you could weep your Eyes out, if you ſhould be never ſo ſevere with yourſelves, you cannot thereby effect this great Work. Sin will not be ſubdued without the Application of Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, and the Exertment of a lively Faith in order to that. We muſt look up ſtedfaſtly to our Mediator and Redeemer, by whoſe Merits alone the Guilt of our Sins can be taken away; and for whoſe Sake the Holy Spirit will vouchſafe to come and dwell in us, and purge away our Filth and Pollution by effectually enabling us to mortify our Luſts and ſinful Appetites, and live the Life of Purity and Holineſs.

AND ſo I now proceed to the next Thing propounded, which is the *ſecond Part* of *Sanctification*, which Divines uſually call *Vivification*, or Newneſs of Life: For I told you, that Mortification is but a Step and Paſſage unto that. To renounce the Fleſh and all its Deſires, and to be dead to them, is *Mortification:* So to live and walk according to the Spirit, is *Vivification.* Behold here an evangelical Paradox? A Chriſtian is *dead* and *alive.* And both theſe are conſiſtent; for he is dead unto Sin, but alive unto Righteouſneſs. The ſame Spirit that mortifies us to a carnal Life, quickens us to a ſpiritual one. That is a moſt certain Propoſition which is delivered by St. *John*, *Eph.* i. 5. *Chap.* xii. 5. [*Whoſoever hath the Son hath Life*]. A bleſſed State of Life is the Portion of all thoſe that are in Chriſt Jeſus. [*The laſt Adam was made a quickening Spirit,*] ſaith the Apoſtle 1 *Cor.* xv. 45. an enlivening or quickning Spirit, not only in reſpect of that Life, which Chriſt inſpires into the dead Bodies at the Reſurrection (which the Apoſtle in that Place chiefly aims at); but alſo in reſpect of that ſpiritual and divine Life, which he actuates all Believers and holy Men with. You muſt know then, that as *to live naturally* is to have a Soul quickning us to the Actions of natural Life, ſo *to live ſpiritually* is to be endued with the Spirit of Chriſt, to be united thereby unto him, and to be quickned to the Performance of all holy Duties. Natural Life is the Union of Soul and Body; ſupernatural or ſpiritual Life is the Union of the Soul to Chriſt, and this is call'd *Newneſs of Life.* What the Soul is to the Body in reſpect of natural Life, that the Spirit of Chriſt is to the Chriſtian in reſpect of ſupernatural Life. This is the true Account of the Life which I'm now ſpeaking of, this is the right Notion of that Part of *Sanctification* which is call'd *Vivification:* For the ſpiritual Vivification is that whereby God's Image is renewed in Man, and whereby he is quickned to a new Life, and lives unto God by the Influence of the Holy Spirit. Vivification is the actual Power of Holineſs, exertingitſelf iuour Hearts and Lives. It is a Living to Righteouſneſs, it is a new Life in a Man.

NOW if you would know more particularly wherein this *ſpiritual Life* conſiſts, and how it diſplays and diſcovers itſelf, take it in theſe following Particulars, (and here I ſhall proceed after the ſame manner that I did before, when I treated of *Mortification* or dying to Sin; for then I ſhew'd you the Analogy and Reſemblance between the *natural Death* and the *ſpiritual One:* And ſo I ſhall now explain the *ſpiritual Life* by the *natural One:* I will let you ſee, that the one is very ſerviceable to illuſtrate the other).

1. THE Operations of all *natural Life* are from an *inward Principle.* Tho' ſome late Philoſophers reckon the ſenſitive Life to be meer Mechaniſm, and conſequently, that a Clock or Watch hath as much Life as an Animal; yet all Men of more ſober and ſedate Minds have concluded (and I believe, he who firſt advanced the Opinion, would have done ſo himſelf upon more mature Thoughts) that *Life* is ſomething of a higher Nature, and is not to be ranked with the Properties of mere Matter moved. *Something within is wanting*, as one ſaid in the like Caſe, namely, concerning a Piece of mechanick Work, that was void of Life; an *inward quickning Principle* is requiſite to give it Life. Matter alone is dull and lumpiſh, there muſt be ſomething diſtinct from that which muſt cauſe Life and Vigour, and that is a Soul; an intrinſick Being that is able to give Life. Thus the *ſpiritual Life*, the Life of Grace and Holineſs, is from an in-

inward Spring, a Principle within: And this diſtinguiſhes it from the counterfeit Life of Hypocrites and formal Profeſſors. Theſe are mere Machines, they move only artificially, they have no vital Principle in them, they are led by ſiniſter Deſigns, they are actuated by unworthy Ends Their Acting is not properly their Own, but they are beholding to external Cauſes and Impulſes. 'Tis recorded of King *Joaſh*, that he was good and religious all the Days of *Jehoiada*, but when *he* died, his Goodneſs and Religion died alſo. Thus many Perſons are acted by the Authority of their Parents, their Friends and godly Relatives; and thence they ſeem to be religious and virtuous: Out of Fear or Love of others, they do ſomething that looks like Godlineſs, but it is not real and ſound; it ſoon vaniſhes, becauſe it hath no true and laſting Spring. There is wanting an intrinſick Motion: The Heart is not right in the Sight of God; the Heart (I ſay) which is abſolutely neceſſary to the true ſpiritual Life. Examine therefore the Sincerity of your Hearts, try whether there be in you a quickning inward Spirit of Grace, ſuch a Principle as doth not depend merely upon outward Motives and Ends. If you have this, you have the true Life in you.

2*dly*, NATURAL *Life* diſcovers itſelf by *Heat*. As long as the Lamp of Life, the vital Flame remains unextinct in the Body, all the Limbs and Members will derive a *Warmth* from it; but when that begins to decay, and much more when it is quite quenched, (as at Death) Coldneſs and Benummedneſs invade all the Parts. Thus it is likewiſe in the *ſpiritual Life*, the Life of Grace and Holineſs; it will certainly diſplay itſelf by kindly Warmth and Heat, ſuch a Heat as will communicate itſelf to all that are near it. Thoſe who converſe with holy and righteous Men will feel the Flames that burn in their Breaſts; for they will endeavour to cheriſh and excite others to Holineſs, to ſtir them up to Goodneſs and Piety; they will labour to kindle and inflame the ſmoaking Flax, to add Life and Vigour to the faint Eſſays and Beginnings of Holineſs. And then as to themſelves, they find a wonderful Warmth in their own Breaſts: Their Hearts burn within them (as 'tis ſaid of Chriſt's Diſciples, when they went to *Emaus*). They are not like the Generality of the World, who are wholly unconcerned at the Things of God, and their own Souls: Theſe buſy not their Heads about ſuch Matters; or, if they be propounded to them, and urged upon them by the Miniſters of Chriſt, or by their kind Neighbours and Friends, they (*Gallio* like) care for none of theſe Things, they are not moved and affected with them: *They ſay unto God, depart from us; and they deſire not the Knowledge of the moſt High.* Theſe frozen Souls will not be thawed, will not be melted even by Hell-fire. The Threatnings of Judgments, both here and hereafter, will not rouze theſe Sleepers. They continue in their Sins without Remorſe, and no Methods that are made Uſe of can make them relent: They are dead Men, there is not that vital Heat in them, which is felt in the Hearts of the ſincere Servants of God: And that genuine Heat is an infallible Sign of ſpiritual Life in them.

3*dly*, OBSERVE, how the *natural Life* is accompanied with *Nutrition*. For there being a daily Decay and Waſting of the Lamp of Life, it is neceſſary, for the Upholding and Maintaining of it, that there be a continual Reſtauration and Repairing; and this is done by Food rightly diſtributed through all the Parts of the Body. This recruits the diſſipated and exhauſted Spirits, this reſtores the decaying Life of Man, this ſets him up again, when he is falling and ſinking. This is the Benefit of daily Nouriſhment: And the like may be ſeen in the *ſpiritual Life* of a Chriſtian. It is maintained and repair'd by a Nouriſhment, ſuitable to its Nature. For as in the Body, the Nouriſhment muſt alway be ſuited to it, and fitted for it (for every Thing will not ſerve for bodily Food); ſo likewiſe the Soul hath its proper Food and Nouriſhment. The ſpiritual Life would expire without a conſtant Supply of ſpiritual Food. And what is this Food but the Word of God and all the divine Truths, the holy Commands, and the comfortable Promiſes which are contained in it? Theſe feed and nouriſh the Soul unto eternal Life: Theſe are the continual Repaſt and Refection of holy Minds. The greateſt Part of Mankind are unacquainted with this excellent Food and Refreſhment, and a perfect Atrophy hath ſeized on their Souls, and they are ſtarved and pined away for Want of this ſpiritual Suſtenance. But the true Believer, on the contrary, is always refreſhing himſelf with the Bread of Life; he ſatiates his Soul with this choice and delicate Food, and thereby receives a conſtant Nouriſhment, and at the ſame time gives undeniable Proof of the ſpiritual Life in him.

thly, As the *natural Life* is upheld by Nouriſhment, ſo in order to that there are implanted in the Nature of Man *Hunger* and *Thirſt*. Theſe excite him to look after that Nutrition which is proper and fit for him. And thus fares it in the *ſpiritual Life* of Man. He is indued with an Appetite ſubſervient to his Food. He hungers and thirſts after Righteouſneſs, he earneſtly deſires the ſincere Milk of the Word that he may be nouriſhed and grow thereby. Whence you may gueſs at the exceſſive Number of thoſe that are *ſpiritually dead*. How few are there that long for the Food of their Souls? They are content to live Months and Years without the ſpiritual Repaſt. They have no Deſire to read or hear the Word of God, they hunger not after the Bread of Life, yea they nauſeate it when it is offer'd to them. This is a Sign of a ſickly Temper, this argues the ſpiritual Life to be very weak, and decaying in them; or rather that there is no true Life in them. For where that is, there is a daily Deſire of Food, and a conſtant Thirſting after God. [Pſal. xlii. 2. *My Soul Thirſteth for God, for the Living God: When ſhall I come and appear before God?*] When ſhall I appear before him in the free Enjoyment of his Ordinances, in the Fruition of the appointed Means of Grace, in the Communion of the Holy Spirit, and in the gracious Preſence of the Almighty? Remember this that as there is a *ſpiritual Food*, ſo there is a *ſpiritual Appetite*. You may try whether the ſpiritual Life be in you by this.

5*thly*, Where there is *Life* there is *Motion*. This is a natural Exertment of the vital and animal Faculties in all living Creatures. The Brain is continually minting new Spirits, which it diſpatches into the Nerves, and thoſe being inſerted into the Muſcles over all the Parts of the Body, the Motive-faculty is produced by that Means; and becauſe the Brain ſtands in need of a conſtant Supply of Spirits to carry on this Motion, there is therefore Care taken for that; and accordingly the *Heart is* made on purpoſe, and its Veſſels are deſignedly framed for the coining of vital Spirits, which the Brain, as ſoon as it receives them, turns into animal Ones, and ſo Motion and Activity are convey'd to the whole Body. In the *ſpiritual Life* alſo there is a reſembling Motion and Agility. The vital Acts of the ſanctified Soul are quick and vigorous. The Spirit of Grace is accompanied with an unſpeakable *Impetus*; the chriſtian Life is a a Life of Motion, Sprightlineſs, and Activity. True Grace will not be dull and unactive in the Soul. Are you alive unto God? Then you will be moving and ſtirring, you will act with great Force, your Undertakings will be vigorous, and in all your Performances there will be diſcern'd a great Vivacity. Thus the natural and ſpiritual Life are alike.

6*thly*, An other Evidence of *common* and *natural Life* is *Senſe*. This and Motion (of which I ſpake laſt) conſtitute the ſenſitive Life of Animals. *Feeling*, ſay the Philoſophers, is the *Senſe of Life*. You may conclude there is Life where there is this, for this is the moſt vital Quality of all living Creatures. They are able to receive Impreſſions, they have a Perception of things, and can diſtinguiſh between them. This is Life and this diſtinguiſhes them from inanimate Beings. And this is the *ſpiritual* and *divine Life* alſo. You cannot more ſignally diſcover the vital Principle of Grace in you than by your ſpiritual Senſation. It is obſervable that the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture expreſſeth the divine Life by the ſpiritual Senſes, in Alluſion to the *Senſes of the Body*. There is firſt of all the ſpiritual *Seeing*, [*In thy Light ſhall we ſee Light*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. xxxvi. 9.] [*In that Day the Eyes of the blind ſhall ſee out of Obſcurity, and out of Darkneſs*, *Iſai.* xxix. 18. And becauſe it is ſaid there; [*the Deaf ſhall hear*] I will mention that other ſpiritual Senſe of *Hearing* in the next Place. [*Thine Ears ſhall hear a Word behind thee*, *ſaying*, *this is the Way*, *walk in it*], Iſai. xxx. 21. Chriſt who ſtiles himſelf the good Shepherd acquaints us that all true Believers, who are his Sheep, *hear his Voice*, John x. 3. There is alſo the ſpiritual *Taſte*, according to that of the Pſalmiſt, [*O taſt* (as well as *ſee*) *that the Lord is good*] Pſal. xxxiv. 8. [*How ſweet are thy words unto my taſte*?) Pſal. cxix. 103. There is *Taſting of the heavenly Gift*, Heb. vi. 4. and *taſting the good Word of God*, in the next Verſe. The other Senſe, is mentioned in the Book of *Canticles* often, Chap. iii. *v.* 12, 13. iv. 10, 11. and by St. *Paul* in 2 *Cor.* ii. 14. who thanketh God for manifeſting *the Savour* or *Odour of the Knowledge of Chriſt in every Place*. Laſtly you read of *feeling after the Lord,* Acts xvii. 27. and of *touching* or *handling the Word of Life,* 1 John i. 1. But thoſe that are alienated from the Life of God are *paſt feeling,* Eph. iv. 18, 19. Thus the *ſpiritual Diſcerning* is anſwerable to the *five Senſes* of the Body. This then is that which I ſay, where the *Life* of Holineſs exerts itſelf, there is a *ſpiritual Senſe.* Therefore you read in *Heb.* v. 6. that thoſe who are ſtrong and lively Chriſtians [*have their Senſes exerciſed to diſcern both Good and Evil*]. This fitly expreſſes the thing which I am now offering to your Conſideration, *viz.* that the actual Exerciſing of the ſpiritual Senſes, ſo as by them to diſcern between Good and Evil, Light and Darkneſs, Holineſs and Unholineſs, is one great Token and Proof of the Life of Grace in you. Examine yourſelves by it I beſeech you.

7thly, WHERE there is *Life* there is *Breath.* And this is ſo true a Maxim, eſpecially concerning Man's Life, that God, the Author of his Life is ſaid to [*breathe into his Noſtrils the Breath of Life, and ſo Man became a living Soul,* Gen. ii. 7.] and the Words in the three learned Languages * which ſignify *Life* and *Soul* do likewiſe ſignify *Breath* or *Air*, or at leaſt are derived from thoſe Words which have that ſignification. *Breath* and *Life* are inſeparable Companions, and when that is taken away, this expires. And the ſame may be ſaid of the *Life of Grace,* which is Holineſs, and of the *ſpiritual Breathing,* which is devout Sighs and Prayers. They are undivided Companions; where there is the divine Life, there is this always to be diſcerned. It is as natural to a Saint to *pray* to God as it is to *breathe.* The Soul breath's and pants after God in ardent Supplications; it is reſtleſs and unquiet till it opens its Caſe before the God of Heaven, till it diſcovers its Wants and Neceſſities, till it freely diſcharges itſelf of its Guilt and Folly, till it earneſtly begs the divine Favour and Pardon, and ſues for Mercy: For Breathing forth its Deſires in affectionate Prayer is the very Life of the ſanctified Soul. The *Dead* make no Requeſts, no Complaints: They are the *Living* whoſe Senſe of their Wants cauſes them to put up their Petitions. A Saint if he doth not pray, cannot live.

* Ruach, πνεῦμα, anima ab ἄνεμος ventus, ſpiritus.

8thly, THE *natural Life* is generally known by the *Pulſe:* And what the Pulſe is to the Body, that the *Affections* are to the Soul; by theſe you may certainly diſcern whether the *ſpiritual Life* be maintained and kept up. You may judge of the Heart by the Pulſe: So you may judge of the vital Principle of Grace by the Motion of your Affections, by the Beating of your Paſſions. Are your Love, Fear, Anger, Sorrow, Joy, and all the other Tendencies of your Affections placed upon their due and right Objects? Are they made ſerviceable to Religion and Godlineſs, and are they governed by Chriſtian Prudence and Moderation? Eſpecially is your *Love,* the leading Affection of the Soul, rightly terminated? Is that fixed on God the chief and eſſential Good? Is your Delight in the Servants of God, in the Saints who are the excellent of the Earth? Do you heartily love your Religion, do you take Pleaſure in it? Do you eſteem it your greateſt Solace and Satisfaction? There is *Pleaſure* and *Delight* in the Actions of *natural Life:* Do you find the ſame in the Exertments of the *ſpiritual one?* Do you feel an unſpeakable Complacency in diſcharging your Duty, in keeping a good Conſcience, in ſerving God ſincerely and uprightly, and eſchewing all Sin and Evil? Is it your chief Contentment to walk before God with upright Hearts? Is the main Inclination and Tendency of your Souls toward Chriſt Jeſus and his Holy and juſt Commands? Then you may conclude you are living Chriſtians; your Pulſe beats, and it beats orderly and well; your Affections are regular, and duly governed, which is a great Evidence of the ſpiritual Life in you.

9thly, Growth and *Increaſe* are an Argument of *Life* in Things *natural,* and they are no leſs in Spirituals. The Saints are called *Trees of Righteouſneſs,* Iſai. lxi. 3. for this Reaſon, it is likely, becauſe Trees and Plants are known to grow and increaſe. The vital Power and Energy that is in a Chriſtian will make him grow daily in all Virtues and Graces of the Spirit, and cauſe him to ſtrive after Perfection.

MOREOVER, Where there is *Life,* it *diffuſes itſelf.* It is the Nature of the *living Principle* to *ſpread it ſelf.* Life in Animals expands itſelf to all the Members of the Body and exerts itſelf in the very extream Parts. Life in Vegetables ſcatters its Influence into the utmoſt Boughs and Branches. Such is the *Life of Grace* in all Believers: It is of a diffuſive Quality, it ſpreads itſelf into a wide Circumference. The ſpiritual Life appears in the whole Man, and in every diſtinct Part of him.

IN the next place, Where there is *Life*, it ſeeks Things *agreeable to itſelf*, it endeavours to ſupport and maintain its Being by due Means and Methods. In order to the preſerving of *natural Life*, and maintaining all the vital Operations and Functions in the Body, it is neceſſary that we carefully avoid whatever is noxious and deſtructive to human Nature, that we guard ourſelves from Diſeaſes as well as we can, and that we run not into the Company of infected Perſons. So to the preſerving of our *ſpiritual Life*, it is requiſite that we carefully ſhun whatever is oppoſite to it, and that we mingle not our ſelves with profane and vitious Men; or if we fall into their Society, that we comply not with their wicked Practices. Men preſerve their Lives by Food, by Phyſick, by Exerciſe. In a like Manner the Life of Grace is upheld and ſupported. The *Food* that is made Uſe of is the Word of God (as you have heard already): The *Phyſick* which is adminiſtred is the Chaſtiſements and Corrections of God's afflicting Hand. By theſe the Servants of God are purged and refined. The *Exerciſe* which they uſe is the conſtant Exerting and Acting of their Graces. They are in daily Motion, they caſt off Idleneſs and Sloth, they are ever employ'd, they are always buſy, they are continually exercis'd in ſome Grace or Duty; and thus the ſpiritual Life is upheld.

I MIGHT add this alſo, what *ſtriving* and *ſtrugling* is there for *Life?* What will not Men undertake, to ſave their Lives? What will not Men part with to ſecure this excellent Treaſure? [*Skin for Skin, yea all that a Man hath will he give for his Life*]. Though the Devil ſaid it, yet it is very true. Men are willing to redeem, their Lives with any thing, be it never ſo dear and precious. [*Skin for Skin*]. You muſt know that in thoſe Countries of old, Money was rare, and Bartering or Changing of Wares was the uſual way of Traffick, and the *Skins* of ſome Beaſts were accounted the choiceſt Commodities they dealt in. Therefore it is ſaid, [*Skin for Skin*], intimating the Bartering of ſome Skins for others, or elſe (as ſome read it) [*Skin upon Skin*] that is, though they be heaped upon one an other, though there be great Store of them, and conſequently they amount to a great Price, yet a Man will part with them all for his Life. Nothing is too dear to ſecure that. And ſhall we not ſay the ſame of the ſpiritual Life? Shall we not prize and eſteem it above all things imaginable? Shall we not part with all that is dear to us for the Security of it? Why do we vainly prefer every Trifle before it, and take ſo little Care about it? For ſhame let us repent of our Folly, and for the future highly value and prize ſo ineſtimable a Bleſſing.

Laſtly, THE utmoſt Improvement of *Life* is *Health* and *Strength*. Then the natural Life ſhews itſelf ſignally when it makes living Creatures hale and luſty. And then the *ſpiritual* and *divine Life* evidences itſelf in a remarkable Manner when we gather *Strength* daily, when the *Power* of it ſhews itſelf in all our Thoughts, Words and Actions, and baffles all other Powers that make Oppoſition againſt it.

AND thus I have briefly ſhew'd you the Reſemblance between the *natural* and *ſpiritual Life*. I hope the one hath fully illuſtrated the other. O how happy will you be, if the *Life of Nature* will teach you to live *the Life of Grace!* That was my Deſign in preſenting the forenamed Particulars to you. As before I illuſtrated the ſpiritual *Mortification* by comparing it with the natural Death of the Body, ſo now I have explained the ſpiritual *Vivification*, or Living unto Righteouſneſs by letting you ſee the Analogy between that and the natural or bodily Life.

ALL the *Inference* which I will make from this Part of my Diſcourſe is this, examine yourſelves, ask yourſelves *what Life* you lead; you live as to your Bodies: The natural Life diſplays itſelf viſibly and apparently: There are ſeveral Signs and Evidences of it. But what Arguments and Tokens are there of your ſpiritual Life? How do you manifeſt to your ſelves or others that you live the Life of Grace? I may uſe that place in *Rev.* iii. 1. where you will find this to be the Reproof of ſome of the Church of *Sardis*, [*I know thy works, that thou haſt a Name, that thou liveſt, and art dead*]: As much as to ſay; I have a perfect Knowledge of your Condition, I am fully acquainted with your Works and Actions, I ſee the outward Exerting of them, and I take notice likewiſe that an inward Spring of Life and Grace is wanting in them. Many of you ſeem to be true Chriſtians, you have a Shew of ſpiritual Life, yea others have a good Opinion of you, and think you are the Children of God and his ſincere Servants: You have *a Name*; you are called and counted Believers and holy Perſons. But what doth it profit you to have a *Name to live?* What will a nominal Life avail you? To be plain with you, I muſt tell you that whilſt you have a Name to live, you are really dead: You have no true Grace in you, you may think you live, and others may think ſo too: But I, who know your Hearts, know this that you are dead: There is no ſpiritual Life wrought in you.

How greatly then are you all concerned to *try* and *examine* yourſelves, whether you are of the Number of thoſe People of *Sardis* who had a name that they lived, but yet notwithſtanding that were dead? Make a Trial of yourſelves by the ſeveral Particulars which I have offered to you. Ask yourſelves whether you act by an inward Principle: Life is from within. Do you diſcover your Life by Warmth and Heat and a becoming Zeal for God and his Glory? Do you hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, and are you deſirous of ſpiritual Nouriſhment? Are Motion and Activity the Attendants of the living Principle within you? Are you indued with an accurate Senſe of your Duty, and do you really feel the Virtue of Goodneſs and Holineſs? Do you breathe and pant after God in earneſt Prayer? Are your Affections duly fixed? Do they beat orderly and regularly? Do you grow in Grace, and make Proficiency in a godly Life? Or do you not grow worſe daily, and decay in all Acts and Habits of ſaving Grace? Is your Life diffuſive, and hath it an univerſal Influence on your whole Converſation? Do you uſe the Means to uphold your ſpiritual Life? And laſtly, doth the ſpiritual Life produce a healthful Temper of Soul? Is it attended with Strength and Fortitude?

Thus ask yourſelves whether the Life of Grace be in you? put the Queſtion ſeriouſly to yourſelves. Some of you have lived Twenty, ſome Thirty, ſome Forty Years and more; you know the Date of your *natural Life*; but examine how many Years you have lived the *Life of Grace*. How long hath the ſpiritual and divine Life exerted itſelf in you? Oh! How ſad and deplorable is it to conſider that the greateſt Numbers of Men and Women that we ſee have no Life in them? In ſuch a Congregation as this how many dead People are there? They ſit or ſtand indeed as if they were alive: But alas you may write over them, *Hic jacent*, here they lie dead in Sins, they are wholly devoid of the Life of Faith and Love, and all other Graces of the Spirit. I beſeech you think ſeriouſly of this weighty Matter, and call your ſelves to an Account, and thoroughly try and examine your Hearts and Lives, and ſee if there be the ſpiritual Life in you. Oh that you who are dead, may hear the Voice of Chriſt this Day, and Live! Oh that the omnipotent Strength of the Almighty may enliven and quicken you.

The more *general Application* of all that I have ſaid either in this or my former Diſcourſe is this, that you would be throughly perſuaded and convinced that it is the *Will of God* that you ſhould be *ſanctified*, which is the *other Obſervable* in the Text: *This is the Will of God, even your Sanctification.* Fix it on your Thoughts; and thence infer the *Neceſſity* of Holineſs. Godlineſs is neceſſary to Salvation: Sanctity is indiſpenſibly requiſite to eternal Happineſs. You cannot think otherwiſe when you take notice of the Revelation which God hath given you in the Scripture concerning the Order and Method of your Salvation. It is vain to expect any other Model, and to flatter yourſelves with any fond Invention of your own. This is the plain and clear *Will of God* that you ſhould be holy in order to your being happy. Holineſs is urged on you in the Goſpel upon Forfeiture of Life and Salvation. An actual Obſervance of the Commands is a neceſſary Condition of inheriting Heaven and purchaſing everlaſting Bliſs. Nothing ſhort of this will ſuffice. Not natural Parts and Abilities: Not the profoundeſt Knowledge and Inſight into the Myſteries of Religion: Not outward Profeſſion: Not good Words and fair Speeches, and mere Talking of Chriſt and Holineſs: Not bare Reſolves and Purpoſes: Not external Semblances of Religion: Not ſome few Acts of bodily Worſhip and outward Devotion.

These, though they paſs with ſome Perſons for *Sanctification*, yet they are not. But that Sanctification which will conduct us unto everlaſting Life hath (as you have heard) theſe two Parts, Mortification and Vivification, Dying unto Sin and Living unto Righteouſneſs. Theſe are the eſſential Parts of true evangelical Sanctification. If you do not experience theſe in you, you have no Reaſon to believe you are truly holy, and you have no Reaſon to think that you ſhall be happy. Obſerve the Apoſtle's Words in Rom. viii. 1. [*There is no Condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus*]. But who theſe are that are thus acquitted from the dreadful Sentence of Condemnation the Apoſtle tells you in the next Words, *who walk not after the Fleſh but after the Spirit*, that is, thoſe who are really ſanctified, whoſe Lives are holy and upright, who ſhew what they are by their ſtrict and circumſpect Walking. Be throughly then confirm'd in this important Truth, that God requires of you an habitual and actual Holineſs, and inherent Righteouſneſs, a real and perſonal Sanctity. *This is the Will of God, even your Sanctification.*

A
DISCOURSE
OF
REGENERATION.

JOHN iii. 3.

Jeſus anſwer'd and ſaid unto him, Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, Except a Man be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God.

OUR Saviour at the Paſſover, next after his Baptiſm began to preach the Goſpel at *Jeruſalem*, the great and famous Metropolis of *Judea:* And he atteſted and confirmed the Truth of the Goſpel by working many Miracles, whereby ſeveral were converted to the Faith, as you read in *John* ii. 23. *Now when he was in Jeruſalem at the Paſſover, on the Feaſt-day, many believed in his Name, when they ſaw the Miracles which he did.* And at this very Time it ſeems a notable *Phariſee*, who was alſo a Ruler of the *Jews* (as you read in the 1 *v.* of this 3*d. Chap.*) *came to Jeſus by Night*, as being afraid to be taken Notice of by the *Jews*, and therefore ſhrouded himſelf under the Darkneſs and Silence of that Seaſon. But when he came into Chriſt's Preſence, he ſoon diſcovered that he was not wholly in the Dark: For he acknowledged Chriſt to be a divine Perſon, and one that proved himſelf to be ſent from Heaven, by the ſtrange Miracles which he wrought, *v.* 2. *He ſaid unto him,* *Rabbi, we know that thou art a Teacher come from God, for no Man can do theſe Miracles that thou doeſt, except God be with him.*

OUR Saviour without doubt encouraged this Acknowledgment of *Nicodemus*, and treated him with great Kindneſs and Affection. But withal he made this manner of Reply to him, What you have ſaid is true, and you do well to own my divine Authority and Commiſſion: There are great Numbers of Men that will not do this, they ſee my Miracles, and hear my Doctrine, but yet remain in their Unbelief: They will by no means be perſuaded that I came from God. But though you readily give Credit to this, and ſo are in a fair way to embrace Chriſtianity, yet let me tell you, there is ſomething elſe to be done in Order to the ſincere and entire embracing of the Goſpel, and the attaining to Life and Salvation by me. If you ever expect to be ſaved by my Undertakings here on Earth, and if you ever hope to be happy in the World to come, you muſt undergo a great Change; wonder not, if I tell you that you muſt be *born again*, *Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, except a Man be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God.*

AT which Words this learned *Phariſee*, this grave Ruler ſtartled at a ſtrange rate. What is that, ſaith he, which you ſay? Muſt a Man be *born again?* How can that be? How can a Man be born when he is Old? *Can he enter the ſecond Time into his Mother's Womb, and be born?* Thus ignorantly and fooliſhly did this Maſter in *Iſrael*, this Teacher and Ruler diſcourſe. He apprehended not the true and genuine Meaning of our Saviour; he thought Chriſt ſpoke of the *natural Birth*, he dreamt not of a *ſpiritual Regeneration*, and of the abſolute Neceſſity of it.

HOW many ſuch *Nicodemus*'s are there? Every City or Town, every Congregation (for the moſt Part) affords too many of this Sort. How ignorant is the generality of the World concerning the ſpiritual Birth? How unintelligible do you talk to them, when you ſpeak of being *born again?* But this is a Matter, wherein all of you are more concern'd than in any Thing elſe imaginable. This is the one Thing neceſſary, this is indiſpenſably requiſite to your Peace and Tranquility here, and that endleſs Bleſſedneſs hereafter. If you have no Experience of this, your Caſe is unſpeakably miſerable, you are the moſt wretched Creatures that breathe. It had been far better for you, that you had never been born, if you be not new born.

THEREFORE you may obſerve that Chriſt repeats what he had ſaid before, he aſſerts the ſame Thing, though with Difference of Words, for (as you read *v.* 5.) *Jeſus anſwered, Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* Except you be admitted into the Church by the ſacred Ordinance of Baptiſm, that is, when it can be adminiſtred: And unleſs that outward Waſhing with Water be accompanied with an inward and ſpiritual Waſhing, you cannot be Partakers of everlaſting Happineſs. You muſt be *born of the Spirit:* For (as it follows in the next Verſe) *that which is born of the Fleſh is Fleſh*; that is, where there is only the natural and common Birth, proceeding from carnal Generation, what can you look for but that which is carnal and ſenſual? But *that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit*; that is, if you find in your ſelves the ſpiritual and heavenly Generation, and a new and extraordinary Birth, then the Effects of that will be the Fruits of the Spirit; your Hearts and Lives will be repleniſhed with the Holy Ghoſt, and your Converſations will be ſpiritual, heavenly and divine. *Marvel not then that I ſaid unto thee* (ſaith Chriſt to *Nicodemus*) *you muſt be born again.* I deliver a moſt neceſſary Doctrine to you: You cannot be my *Diſciple*, and it is impoſſible you ſhould be a *Chriſtian* (truly ſo call'd) unleſs you underſtand aright the ſecond Birth. Liſten therefore I pray, to it: Seriouſly obſerve what I tender to you: Fix this ſtedfaſtly upon your Mind, that there is nothing of ſo great Importance and Neceſſity as this, that you be *born again.*

IF we caſt our Eyes on the Margin of our Bibles, we ſhall find that the *Greek* Word, which in the Text is tranſlated [*again*] is there rendred [*from above*] and ſo 'tis in the 7th verſe. And indeed this is the uſual and moſt common Interpretation of the *Greek* Word ἄνωθεν. It is moſt frequently in Authors found to be of the ſame import with *supernè* and *cœlitus* in the *Latin*, which is exactly rendred in *Engliſh* [*from above*] or [*from Heaven*]. Therefore *Origen* and ſome others of the Antients, and *Eraſmus* among the Moderns interprets it thus. But other Fathers, as St. *Chryſoſtom* and St. *Auſtin*, and moſt of the Moderns underſtand it as it is in our Tranſlation, and are of the Opinion, that the *Greek* Word doth not ſignify [from above], but [again]. I cannot for my Part be ſo peremptory, for I find that the *Greek* Word is ambiguous: It hath three Significations, Firſt, *From above*, James i. 17. iii. 15, 17. *John* iii 31. Secondly, *Before* or *heretofore*, Acts xxvi. 5. Thirdly, *Again*, and this is the uſe of the Word in many *Greek* Authors, and in this Place of St. *John*. But I am of the Opinion, that the *Syriack* Word which Chriſt himſelf uſed, had no *Ambiguity*, but plainly and poſitively was the ſame with our *Engliſh* Word [*again*]: For ſo it appears from *Nicodemus*'s Reply, who with out doubt underſtood the Propriety of the *Syriack* Tongue: That being then his native Language, as it was of all the *Jews* at that Time, they having a long while before loſt their pure *Hebrew* in the Captivity, and the *Syriack* (which is a Medley of *Hebrew* and *Chaldee*) became their proper Tongue: It appears (I ſay) to be ſo from *Nicodemus*'s Reply to our Saviour, *Can a Man* (ſaid he) *enter the ſecond Time*, that is, *Again*, *into his Mothers Womb?* Whence it is evident, that the *Syriack* Word then uſed by Chriſt ſignified [*again*], as it is tranſlated in our *Engliſh* Bibles.

THIS Tranſlation then I will adhere to, and found upon the Words of the Text this plain Propoſition, namely, that there is an utter Impoſſibility of ſeeing the Kingdom of God, unleſs we be born again. Or thus, Regeneration muſt neceſſarily precede Salvation: Or in other Words (becauſe I would fix this great Truth upon you) take it thus, our ſpiritual and new Birth is abſolutely requiſite in order to future Bleſſedneſs. *Except a Man be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God.* And you may take Notice, that our Saviour uſhers this in with a very ſolemn Aſſeveration, [*verily, verily*] which he never makes uſe of, but when the Matter is of vaſt Moment and Concern, and when he intends that thoſe he ſpeaks to ſhould be very attentive to what he ſaith.

NOW in purſuance of this Doctrine (which is the Reſult of the Words) I will employ myſelf chiefly in ſetting before you, and explaining to you the *true Nature* of this *new Birth*, which our Saviour here ſpeaks of, and aſſures us is ſo neceſſary to Salvation. And here I will firſt enquire into the *Terms* of the Propoſition wherein this Truth is contain'd, and by which it is convey'd, I will ſay ſomething of the *Manner of the Expreſſion* here uſed, and after that I will ſearch into the *Thing itſelf*.

Firſt, IT will not be amiſs, to premiſe ſomething concerning the *Manner of ſpeaking* here us'd by Chriſt. The Form and Idiom of Speech is remarkable: We muſt be *born again*, ſaith our Saviour. In this, as in many other Things, he complies with the Language and Dialect, which had been uſed before by others. He boggles not at the Expreſſions of *Philoſophers*, but he takes them into *his Religion*, and makes uſe of them to ſet forth greater and higher Things than *they* did before. Παλιγγενεσία (which is no other then *Regeneration*, or *being born again*) is the *Platoniſts* Word for the Renovation of all Things, after certain Intervals and Revolutions. When ſuch Planets are gone through their ſet Stages, then Things ſhall be as they were before, ſay they, they ſhall return to their old Poſture again. This is call'd by the Royal Philoſopher, a * *Periodical Regeneration*, becauſe it is a Reſtoration after certain *Periods* of Years. And this alſo is the *Stoicks* Word for the Renovation of all Things, after the Conflagration of the World: For they (as well as *Chriſtians*) hold that the World ſhall be burnt up, and that then there ſhall be new Heavens and a new Earth, and that all Things ſhall appear in another Form and Guiſe. They tell us, that after the ἀνάστασις or *Everſion* of all Things, there will be an ἀποκατάστασις a *Reſtitution*, or a παλιγγενεσία a *Regeneration* of all Things.

* Περιοδικὴ παλιγγενεσία. Antonin.

AND this very Word ſerves the *Pythagoreans* likewiſe, to expreſs their *Tranſmigration of Souls*. According to thoſe antient Philoſophers, Mens Souls were ſaid to be *born again*, when they entred into new Bodies, as they fondly fancied they did.

BUT to come nearer to the Matter, this Phraſe of being *born again*, was uſed ſometimes by the beſt *Gentile* Moraliſts to ſignify a *new State of Mind*, and to denote the *Change of Mens Manners*, and ſo it approaches towards the Meaning of the Expreſſion in the Text, as I ſhall ſhew you afterwards.

But this way of ſpeaking was not unuſual among the *Jews* alſo, as well as the *Gentiles*; for thoſe that are ſkilled in *Jewiſh* Learning know, that the *Proſelytes* among the *Jews* were ſaid to be *born again.* And therefore Chriſt ſaith, *v.* 10, *Art thou a Maſter of Iſrael, and knoweſt not theſe Things?* Art thou a Man of more then ordinary Knowledge among that People, and yet art ignorant of the uſual Stile and Cuſtom of thy own Nation? We muſt know then, that the Practice of the *Jews* was to receive *Proſelytes* into the Church by *Baptiſm.* They were perſuaded that by that Waſhing, the *Heathen* Soul was waſhed away, and a new and clean one was given in Lieu of it: Thence ſuch a Perſon was ſaid to be *new born*, to be a *new Creature*, a *new Man:* Chriſt therefore ſpeaks to *Nicodemus* of *being born again* after the *Jewiſh* Stile, that is, of the *Rabbins* eſpecially, which Senſe *Nicodemus* thought not of at that Time, but groſly miſtook Chriſt's Words.

Yea, I muſt add in the next Place, that *Nicodemus* was ſtrangely over ſeen, and had hugely forgot himſelf; becauſe ſuch a Man as he (that is, a *Phariſee*, and a Man of Knowledge and Ability among the *Jews*) could not be unacquainted with the *Old Teſtament.* Now, 'tis evident that this *new Birth* is ſpoken of there, although under other Terms and Expreſſions. It is plainly promiſed in *Ezek.* xxxvi. 26. *A new Heart will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you.* This new Heart, and this new Spirit are the ſame with being *born again.* And it follows, *I will take away the ſtony Heart out of your Fleſh, and I will give you a Heart of Fleſh.* The Heart of unregenerate and unconverted Perſons is *ſtony*, ſo hard that it is not mollified by the gracious Promiſes of the Goſpel, nor broken by the dreadful Threatnings of the Law. But the Heart of a true Convert is a Heart of *Fleſh*, ſoft and tender, pliant and flexible, yielding to every Impreſſion of divine Grace, trembling at God's Threatnings and Judgments, and complying with all his righteous Laws and Injunctions. This [*giving a Heart of Fleſh*] expreſſes the *new Birth.* And in *Jer.* xxxi. 33. it is thus ſet forth, *I will put my Law in their inwards Parts, and write it in their Hearts.* And in other Places of the Old Teſtament, you read of *creating a clean Heart*, and *renewing a right Spirit*, of *circumciſing the Heart*, and of *turning with the whole Heart to the Lord*; theſe denote unto us the ſpiritual *Regeneration* or *new Birth.*

But this is expreſly, and in the very Terms ſet down in the *New Teſtament*, as in 1 *Pet.* i. 3. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who according to his abundant Mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively Hope*, and *v.* 23. *Born again not of corruptible Seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.* The evangelical Temper of Chriſtians, and their Change of Heart and Life are ſet forth by *Regeneration.* The Word παλιγγενεσία is uſed but twice in the New Teſtament, and then 'tis applied to this Purpoſe. Firſt, You meet with it in *Mat.* xix. 28. *Jeſus ſaid, verily I ſay unto you, that ye who have followed me in the Regeneration, when the Son of Man ſhall ſit on the Throne of his Glory, ye alſo ſhall ſit on twelve Thrones judging the twelve Tribes of Iſrael:* Which ſome Expoſitors have thought, is ſpoken concerning the *Reſurrection*, and that *this* is here called the *Regeneration.* But I cannot ſubſcribe to that Interpretation, but rather think that the *Goſpel* is called the *Regeneration*, it being the Reſtitution of lapſed and depraved Nature, it being the reſtoring of a new Life, it being accompanied with a ſecond and ſpiritual Birth. And you find that Word again, in *Tit.* iii. 5. *Not by Works of Righteouſneſs which we have done, but according to his Mercy, he ſaved us by the waſhing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.* Sanctification is here called Regeneration, or it may be applied to *Baptiſm*, the Laver of Regeneration; becauſe when the Holy Ghoſt concurs with that ſacred Ordinance, the *new Birth* is wrought in the Children of Believers, and they are *regenerate* and *born again* (as our Church affirms in the Office of Baptiſm). So that this Place which I laſt named runs parallel with that before mentioned (*viz.* the Verſe but one after the Text) where you read of *being born of Water, and of the Spirit*; which is the very ſame with the *Waſhing of Regeneration, and the Renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.* Thus I have enquired into the Manner of Expreſſion, the Form of Speech here uſed by our Saviour. And if ever we are to be *critical* about Words and Terms, it is moſt lawful when we ſearch into the Words of the Scripture: And you ſee, that the Criticiſm which I have offer'd to you, is attended with very uſeful and profitable Notions, and ſuch as help us to underſtand the Word of God more fully.

Now in the next Place I will be more inquiſitive about *the Thing it ſelf*, which is couched in this Form of Words. I muſt remind you then that there is a *double Birth* or *Nativity*; firſt, the *Common* and *Natural* one, when the teeming Mother is delivered of her Burthen; when the time is come that the tender Infant quits its cloſer and darker Cell, wherein it had ſuffered ſome Months Impriſonment, and peeps into the World, and then appears on the Stage of it, and ſo enters into a new State, and a different Condition from what it was in before, and converſes with thoſe of its own Kind, and enjoys itſelf in the World. But there is alſo a Second, which is a *ſpiritual Nativity*, and that is not of the Body only, but of the Soul, or rather it is not of the Body only, but of both Body and Soul (for, as I ſhall ſhew you afterwards, *Regeneration* reaches the outward Man as well as the Inward.) By this 2d. Birth the whole Man is wonderfully Changed, and enters into a new Condition, and is as if it were born into an other World, and therefore this Change is figuratively call'd a new Birth. By natural Generation, by our firſt Birth we are not capable of the Kingdom of Heaven: Therefore we muſt be born again, that we may be able to enter into it. *Chriſtians are made, not born ſo*, ſaid *Tertullian* with reference to himſelf when he was a Heathen and unconverted. The ſame in ſome Sort may be ſaid of any that are Born into the World, that Birth doth not make them holy Perſons and good Chriſtians: There muſt be an other Birth that muſt effect That. There muſt be a new Nativity. The Perſon muſt be born in the divine Shape and Likeneſs, and ſo become a Child of God. To be born again is to have our Nature, which is Corrupted by Sin, ſanctified and purified, to have our Sins purged away, and to be indued by God's Spirit with true Knowledge, Righteouſneſs and Holineſs.

In this *Generation* God is our *Father*, James i. 18. *Of his own will begat he us*, and with God the Father concurres the *Holy Spirit*, as you read in the Verſe but one after the Text and likewiſe in the Verſe following, *That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit.* And indeed this work of Regeneration is more peculiarly attributed to the Holy Ghoſt: He is the Sanctifier, regenerating Grace is more eſpecially from him. Again, the Word of God is the *Seed*, 1 Peter i. 23. *Being born again, not of corruptible, but of incorruptible by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.* So in *James* i. 18. *He begat us with the Word of Truth.* And in the Parable of the Sower and of the ſeveral ſorts of Grounds you read expreſly (*Luke* viii. 11.) that *the Seed is the Word of God.* Moreover, the ſpiritual *Conception* and *Formation* is when the Spirit and the Word effectually operate in the Soul. Of this the Apoſtle ſpeaks when he tells the *Galatians* that *he travailed in Birth till Chriſt was formed in them.* Galat. iv. 19. And finally, when the ſanctified Chriſtian is enabled to *bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit*, then the ſpiritual Birth is accompliſhed.

This Regeneration which I am now ſpeaking of, is called (and that very fitly and ſignificantly) a *new Creature*, or a *new Creation*, for the *Greek* ſignifies both, and may be rendered either way. This Evangelical and Chriſtian Manner of ſpeaking is uſed in 2 *Cor.* v. 17. *If any Man be in Chriſt he is a new Creature.* Which Words may be read either Enuntiatively, if any Man be in Chriſt, he actually *is* a new Creature, taking it in the *Indicative Mood*, as our Engliſh Tranſlaters do. Or you may read the Words as ſpoken Exhortatively, *Let* him be a new Creature, and ſo 'tis tranſlated in the Margin of our Bibles, as if it were in the *Imperative Mood.* Either of thoſe ways it may be read, as thoſe that conſult the *Greek* Text know very well. According to this different Reading a Man may be ſaid to be *in Chriſt* theſe two ways, firſt, when a Man is a viſible Member of the Church of Chriſt, and makes an outward Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and when he is in Chriſt Sacramentally, that is, when he is admitted into Chriſt's Church by holy Baptiſm, Galatians iii. 27. *As many of you as have been Baptized into Chriſt have put on Chriſt.* Secondly, A Man is *in Chriſt* moſt properly when he not only profeſſes Chriſtianity, but ſhews the Power and Virtue of it by a holy Life, when he is a living Member of Chriſt's Body, when Chriſt lives in him, and he in Chriſt by the ſame Spirit.

If you underſtand a Man's *being in Chriſt* in the firſt Senſe, then the Words muſt be taken as if they were utter'd to this Effect, if any Man outwardly profeſſes Chriſt let him ſee that he proceed further, let him add unto his external Profeſſion an inward Change of Heart, let him be a new Creature. But if you underſtand a Man's *being in Chriſt* in the other Senſe, then this Clauſe declares what manner of Perſon he is that is inwardly and truly in Chriſt, he is a new Creature: This is the right Deſcription of him. What ever other Qualities you attribute to him, they are in compariſon of This inſignificant. Say that he is a new Creature, or ſay that a new Creation hath paſſed upon him, and then you fully expreſs his regenerate Condition.

YOU muſt know then that there are two *Creations*, one of the great World, of which *Gen.* i. treateth; the other of the leſſer, for ſo Man is called, and of this the Evangelical Prophets, and Chriſt Jeſus, and the Apoſtles diſcourſe. And there is a great Reſemblance between theſe two: Otherwiſe the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture would not ſo often apply the Word of *Creating* to the Converſion and Regeneration of Sinners. *Create in me a clean Heart*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt. And in *Epheſians* iv. 24. the new Man is ſaid to *be Created in Righteouſueſs and true Holineſs.* And we are ſaid to be *God's Workmanſhip created in Chriſt Jeſus to good Works*, Epheſians ii. 10. Coloſians iii. 10. *Ye have put on the new Man which is renewed in Knowledge, after the Image of him that Created him.* Thus the regenerate State is termed a *Creation*: And 'tis deſervedly call'd ſo,

1. BECAUSE Creation is properly the *Production of ſomething out of nothing.* God the Creator produced the Heavens and the Earth out of a mere Non-entity; there was nothing pre-exiſting to yield Materials for Production. And this ſets forth the Nature of the *ſpiritual Creation* in the Soul of Man: It is clearly out of nothing. We afford no Matter towards the new Creation; there is nothing in us that contributes to the Regenerating and firſt Sanctifying of our Minds.

2dly, CREATION being out of nothing, it is *very Difficult*, yea, it is the *Work only of an Almighty hand.* This alſo repreſents the exceeding Greatneſs of the Work of Converſion, and the Reſtoring of a Sinner. It is no leſs than a Creation, and that is an Act of Omnipotency; the Power whereby lapſed Man is Regenerated muſt be acknowledged to be Almighty. Thus St. *Paul* prays that the Epheſians *may have the Spirit of Wiſdom to know what is the exceeding Greatneſs of his Power towards them that believe, according to the Working of his mighty Power, which he wrought in Chriſt, when he raiſed him from the Dead.* A place well worth our conſulting, *Epheſians* i. 17, 19, 20. What could be more full and Emphatical? Every ſyllable hath its Weight and Force. There is *Power*, and *Greatneſs of Power, and exceeding greatneſs of Power:* There is *mighty Power*, and the *Working of that mighty Power:* and the Pattern of all is the miraculous *Raiſing of Chriſt from the Dead*, which was the greateſt and moſt ſignal Demonſtration of the divine Power that ever was. And this is the very Power that is exerted *towards them that believe*: But you will ſay, we are commanded *to awake, and ariſe from the Dead*, Eph. v. 14. and therefore we may thence infer that we have Power *of our own* to awake and ariſe from the Death of Sin. I anſwer, we may as well gather that the Damſel, mention'd in the *Acts*, and *Lazarus* who is ſpoken of in St. *John's Goſpel*, had power to raiſe themſelves from the Dead, becauſe one of them is bid to *ariſe*, Acts ix. 40, and the other is commanded to *come forth*, John xi 43. I pray obſerve it, the forecited Text in the Epiſtle to the *Epheſians* aſſures us that the ſame Power which *raiſed Chriſt Jeſus from the Dead* is put forth in the *Reclaiming* and *Converting of Sinners*, and begetting *Belief* in them. You may remember therefore that in the Stile of Scripture *Regeneration* is ſtiled a *Reſurrection*, as in Revelation x. 6. *Bleſſed and happy is he that hath Part in the firſt Reſurrection*, and in *Col.* iii. 1. we are ſaid to be *riſen with Chriſt*, riſen unto newneſs of Life. To *raiſe the Dead*, and to *Create* are the Exertments of no leſs then a divine Power; and ſuch (you ſee) is *Regeneration*, the Baſis of which is a lively and operative Faith, and that in a particular Manner is the Manifeſtation of an extraordinary Strength, as the Apoſtle prays for the *Theſſalonians* that *God would fulfill in them the Work of Faith with Power*, Theſ. ii. 1. 11.

I MIGHT add under this Head, that it is more difficult, according to our Apprehenſion, to Regenerate a Man then to Create him. The ſecond Creation argues a greater Power than the firſt. For there was no Reſiſtance in the firſt Creation; there being nothing, nothing could reſiſt: But Man, who is the ſubject of the ſecond Creation, is refractory and obſtinate, fiercely oppoſes the Work of God on his Soul, reſiſts the Motions of the Holy Spirit, and refuſes to be Converted. The Omnipotent Arm therefore exerts itſelf, and beats down all Oppoſition, and makes the Soul *willing in the Day of its Power.* In the great World there was Matter without Form, there was a diſorderly Chaos, Darkneſs and Coufuſion:

But the Spirit moved on the Waters and other Bodies, and brought them into a comely Order. Thus God (in the new Creation) turns men's Hearts as the Rivers of Waters, works upon the confuſed and depraved Minds of Sinners, and ſo powerfully influences on their Hearts and Lives that they become other Men.

3*dly*, THE reſemblance between the firſt and ſecond Creation appears in this, that This is *Gradual*, as well as That was. When God made the World, he did it not all at once, but ſpent ſix Day's time in Conſummating it. So alſo the ſpiritual Creation or Regeneration is not Perfect at once, but proceeds by Degrees, *the inward Man*, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *is renewed day by day*, 2 Cor. iv. 16. This like the firſt Creation is ſtep by ſtep, we advance leiſurely and gradually, and at laſt ariſe to *a Perfect Man in Chriſt Jeſus*.

I MIGHT add alſo in the 4th plaee, that there is a continual Maintenance and Increaſe of Grace, conſtant and hourly Supplies of the Spirit of God, which do not only prevent us but follow us: And Chriſt Jeſus is to be acknowledged not only the *Author* but *Finiſher of our Faith*.

THIS new Supply may be called a *Creation*, to ſpeak according to that Maxim, the Upholding and Suſtaining of Things in their Being is to be reckoned as a Creating of them afreſh. *Preſervation* and *Creation* are both alike, for as the latter imports a Producing out of nothing, ſo the former denotes a Keeping from falling into nothing, from being annihilated.

THUS you ſee on ſeveral Conſiderations that *Sanctification* and *Regeneration* are not unlike to *Creation*. Before a Man be recovered out of the State of Sin, a new Creation muſt paſs upon him: And therefore he is deſervedly ſtiled by the Apoſtle a *new Creature*, as in the place before named, and likewiſe, in Galatians vi. 15. *In Chriſt Jeſus neither Circumciſion availeth any Thing nor Uncircucmciſion, but a new Creature*. Now, this new Creature is explained to us in two other places of Scripture, firſt in 1 Cor. vii. 9. *Circumciſion is nothing, and Uncircumciſion is nothing but the keeping of the Commandments of God.* Keeping the Commandments of God, obſerving his Laws is a Deſcription of the *new Creature*, and in an other place *Galatians* v. 6. which begins as this Text of the Apoſtle doth, and ſo deſcribes the ſame thing to us, it is ſet forth thus, *neither Circnmciſion availeth any thing nor Uncircumciſion, but Faith which worketh by Love.* The working of Faith by Love is a Character of the new Creature. Thus *comparing* theſe Texts together, you may inform yourſelves concerning the Nature of *Regeneration* or the *new Creature*. It contains in it a lively Faith, and that Faith diſcovers itſelf by Evangelical Works of Love, and by keeping the Divine Commandments.

AND for the further Explaining of this Regeneration or new Birth, you may obſerve that it is called the *new Man*, and is oppoſed to the *old Man*, that is, the corrupt and depraved Nature and Manners of Men. The Apoſtle repreſents this in his holy Advice in Epheſians iv. 22, 23, 24. *Put off concerning the former Converſation, the old Man which is corrupt according to the deceitful Luſts: And be Renewed in the Spirit of your Minds. And put on the new Man, which after God is created in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs.* We ſee that *the putting off the old Man*, and the *putting on the new Man*, are in the Apoſtle's divine Stile and Phraſe expreſſive of *Regeneration*. And the unregenerate State is properly call'd the *old Man*, becauſe it is derived to us from *Adam*, and becauſe it is more Ancient in us than the new Man; for Nature preceds Grace, and not this that. But the regenerate State is called the *new Man*, and that for this Reaſon chiefly, becauſe Regeneration is an Introducing of new Qualities into the Soul. Old Things are paſſed away, and all Things in a regenerate Perſon are become new. A great Change is wrought: The Man is as it were newly Created by God. *Regeneration* and *Renovation* are joyn'd together in Titus iii. 5. *He ſaved us by the Waſhing of Regeneration, and Renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.* There muſt be an Abolition of the old depraved Nature; there muſt be a Redintegration or Reſtitution of the primitive Innocency and Purity. What was ſaid of *Caleb* muſt be verified of every Regenerate Man, *He had an other Spirit with him*, Numb. xiv. 24. By an *other Spirit*: is meant a *new Spirit*: For this is the Stile of the Scripture. *The Lord ſhall call his Saints by another Name*, Iſai. lxv. 15. The lxx. render it a *new Name*, yea the Prophet calls it a *new Name*, Iſai. lxii. 2. [*thou ſhalt be called by a new Name*]. What St. *Luke* calls *other Tongues*, Acts ii. 4.

are called *new Tongues*; Mark xvi. 17. So then this *other Spirit* given to *Caleb* was the ſame with Ezekiel's *New Spirit*, Ezek. xi. 19. xxxvi. 26. And this is given to every ſanctified Perſon; he hath an other and a new Spirit, a Spirit different from what others have, and different from what he once had himſelf. This the Apoſtle calls a *Renewing in the Spirit of the Mind*, Eph. iv. 23. Where there is the ſpiritual Regeneration, there is a Renewing, Reſtoring, a Repairing of the Souls of Men; there is a Purging out of the old Leaven, and an Implanting of a new Nature.

BUT further to diſcover to you the true Nature of Regeneration, and to let you ſee what the new Creature and the new Man are, I muſt acquaint you that it is not a Phyſical, but a Moral Change which is to be underſtood by them. There is no new Soul or Subſtance wrought in a Man according to the fond Conceit of ſome *Jewiſh Rabbies* (as I hinted before) who held that a * new Soul was given to thoſe Perſons that became *Jews*, and were converted from *Paganiſm*. Nor are there any new Faculties created in the Soul: Theſe ſtill remain as to their phyſical Eſſence and Nature, although they are changed as to their Quality. There are introduced new Operations and Tendencies into the Soul of Man, new Thoughts and Apprehenſions, new Deſires and Inclinations, new Appetites and Diſpoſitions, new Paſſions and Affections. Regeneration is not a Change of the Subſtance of the Soul, but a Reſtoring of its primitive Purity and Integrity by the regenerating Grace of God's Spirit. In ſhort, Regeneration is an Infuſion of new Habits, or an Impreſſing of new Qualities on the Mind of Man. And I muſt add, it is a *real Change* in contradiſtinction to thoſe *Relative* ones of *Juſtification*, and *Adoption*, by the former of which we are reputed Holy and Juſt on the account of Chriſt's Righteouſneſs imputed to us, and by the latter we are honoured with the Dignity of Sons. But this Change I am ſpeaking of is Abſolute, Perſonal, and Inherent, and by this the *Relative* Change is *manifeſted* and *diſcovered*. Now, this Perſonal Change is an Alteration of Qualities made in us, whereby we become as it were other Perſons. Whereas we had corrupted ourſelves, and done evilly, we begin anew, and go all over again. When the Grace of God enables us to do this, then we have attained to the *new Birth*, to the *ſpiritual Regeneration*.

* Selden de Jure Nat. & Gent.

NOW farther yet I am to ſhew that this conſiſts in a double Change, that of our *Minds*, and that of our *Lives* or *Practices*. The former is Internal and Inviſible, and therefore ought to be diſcover'd and made apparent by the latter, which is external and eaſily diſcerned. The two integral Parts of the new Man are Body and Soul; yea there is a third Part added by the Apoſtle in *Theſ.* i. 5: 23. for there he mentions *Body, Soul and Spirit*: the *Body* is that Part which is expoſed to the View; the *Soul* may ſignify the lower Faculties, and the *Spirit* the higher and nobler Functions and Operations of the Mind. All theſe muſt be Changed and Renewed: One as well as an other muſt be Sanictfied and Purified. For the new Man is no Monſter; one Part and Member is not diſproportionable to an other. There is a thorough Change of the whole Man; there is a compleat Reſtauration: Head, and Heart, and Life are Changed. All the Powers of the Soul, and all the Parts of the Body are Renewed. As *Eliſha* the Prophet ſpread himſelf over the whole Child, and applied Member to Member; ſo in the Reviving and Reſtoring of the Sinner, the Regenerating Grace of God is applied to every Part of him. Accordingly I ſhall now ſhew you that the Change which is wrought in a regenerate Man is, 1. In his Underſtanding. 2. In his Will. 3. In his Affections, and 4thly and laſtly in his whole Life and all his Actious.

Firſt, I begin with the Change wrought in the *Mind* or *Soul* of Man: On which account this Change is call'd by the Apoſtle the *Inward Man*, 1 Cor. iv. Eph. iii. The Soul and its Faculties being corrupted and out of Order; the firſt Thing to be done in the Reſtauration of Man is the Setting of theſe right, the Reſtoring theſe to their primitive Integrity and Uprightneſs. The three Principal Faculties which are to be Chang'd are the Underſtanding, the Will, and the Affections. For though there are other Faculties and Operations of the Soul, as the Memory, and the Fancy, yet they being under the Conduct and Influence of the forenamed Functions of the Soul, I need not diſtinctly and particularly inſiſt upon them. I ſhall therefore directly proceed to ſpeak firſt of the *Change in the Underſtanding*.

1. THIS Faculty, which is the Inlet of all Good or Evil, muſt undergo a thorough Purgation, and have all the falſe and erroneous Principles which it hath imbibed, be blotted quite out; it muſt be diveſted of thoſe Miſtakes and Prejudices which it hath ſo long entertained againſt God and his Ways: A new Light muſt be convey'd into this endarkned Faculty, and the Knowledge of God in Chriſt Jeſus, (which tranſcends all other Notices and Ideas in the World) muſt be diffus'd through this excellent Region of the Soul. Man's whole Nature is vitiated and depraved by the Fall, and the Impairing of mans *Reaſon* may be reckoned among the reſt of the original Corruptions of his Nature. Therefore in every regenerate Perſon there is, and muſt be a Change in the *rational Faculty*. There muſt be an apparent Change from falſe Reaſonings, corrupt Sentiments, and erroneous Opinions to true and right Notions of Things. The Mind, as to its Perſwaſions, is to be hugely altered. As wicked and unregenerated Men are Corrupted in their Conceptions and Apprehenſions, ſo the true Convert finds theſe amended and rectified. His undue Prejudices are laid aſide, and the groſs Miſtakes which he lay under before, are removed, and he now thinks and conceives rightly. In the Work of Regeneration the Holy Ghoſt doth always enlighten the Underſtanding and ſo becomes the Cauſe of the *Right* Exerting of *Reaſon*. For when the underſtanding is clear'd by this Holy and Divine Light, the Man is enabled to exerciſe his Reaſon in the *beſt* Manner: That is, againſt Sin and Vice, and what ever oppoſes the Juſt and righteous Laws of God. Whereas before he us'd his Logick to defend and juſtify the Ways of wickedneſs, and employ'd his diſcourſive Faculty againſt the God that gave it him, making it his Buſineſs to maintain Sin by Argument, and to preſent it to himſelf and others with a fair Shew of Reaſon: Now (on the contrary) he Diſputes and Argues for Virtue and Holineſs, he makes uſe of his Reaſon and Logick to defend Religion and the Cauſe of God.

IT muſt needs be ſo, becauſe his Mind is Enlightned, and the Rays of divine Truth and Knowledge are darted into it. Hence it is that his Notions are Altered, his Brain is Purified, his Reaſon is Rectified. There are new Lights ſet up in the Soul and Conſcience, by which their Apprehenſions are directed and modell'd. *You were once Darkneſs, but now are ye Light in the Lord*, ſays the Apoſtle *Eph.* v. 8. Where the new Creature is not, there *Men's Underſtandings are darkned being alienated from the Life of God through the Ignorance that is in them becauſe of the Blindneſs of their Hearts*, Eph. iv. 18. Before the new Birth takes place in Mens Souls, they are ignorant of the great and neceſſary Truths of Religion, they falſly conceive of all Things in it, and ſo have no Knowledge of their State and Condition, and ſee nothing amiſs in themſelves, but are pleas'd with all they do. The groſs Blindneſs of their Minds is the Cauſe of this.

THERE is a Neceſſity therefore that the new Birth ſhould be attended with new Exertments of the Underſtanding. Which the Apoſtle aſſerts in Col. iii. 9. 10. *Ye have put off the old Man with his Deeds, and have put on the new Man which is renewed in Knowledge, after the Image of him that Created him.* The new Man is never devoy'd of a new Underſtanding and Knowledge. He hath caſt off his falſe Apprehenſions, and is indued with true Ones. He may ſay with him in the Goſpel, whom Chriſt cured of his Blindneſs, *whereas I was Blind, now I ſee*; I was once a poor dark Creature, and had no Knowledge of God or of his Ways: But now by the Illumination of the Spirit, I am able to ſee the Error of my Ways, and to underſtand the Excellency of Religion. There is a light ſtruck into my Soul: There is a Change in my Apprehenſions. I think otherwiſe of Things and Perſons than I did once.

FOR this is certain that the Judgments of the Regenerate and Unregenerate are vaſtly different: the One ſaith of *Chriſt, He is fairer then the Children of Men*, Pſal. xlv. 2. The Other ſaith, *He hath no form or Comelineſs*, Iſai. liii. 2. * St. *Jerom* tells us that the time was when he found Fault with the Stile of the Holy Scripture, and thought it ſavour'd of Barbariſm, but afterwards he had other thoughts, and in many places of his Writings doth highly extol the Excellency of the Scripture Language. We may read in Mr. *Boltons* Life, that when he came from *Oxford* at the Commencement Time, and heard Mr. *Perkins* preach at *Cambridge*, he cried out that he was *a barren fellow, and a mean Scholar*: But not long after he chang'd his Tune, and profeſſed that he was groſly miſtaken concerning

* Siquando Prophetas legere cœpiſſem, ſermo horrebat incultus, Epiſt. ad Euſtoch.

concerning that Perſon, and he acknowledged him to be a *profound Divine*, a *good Scholar* and *a worthy Man.* When he was Changed himſelf, then he changed his Opinion concerning that eminent Servant and Miniſter of Chriſt. The *new Birth* brings a *new Judgment* with it: And hereby thoſe are accounted moſt excellent who before were thought to be Vile and Unworthy. Thoſe Ways and Courſes which heretofore were approved of, are now diſliked: And thoſe very Things which were then diſeſteemed and vilify'd, are now highly valued. He that in times paſt ſcoffed at Holineſs, and Laught at a ſtrict Life, now accounts them to be of the greateſt Importance imaginable. Before, with *Eſau*, he would have parted with the greateſt Bleſſing for an Inconſiderable Thing, but now (with the wiſe Merchant) he is ready to ſell all to buy the Pearl of great Price.

THIS Change of Judgment is notably ſet forth by St. *Paul* in *Phil.* iii. from the 4th. to the 10th and 11th Verſes: Firſt, he tells you what was his former Judgment and Opinion, how he thought before the time of Regeneracy and Converſion. *I might* (ſaith he) *have Confidence in the Fleſh*, as heretofore I had, for *if any other Man thinketh that he hath whereof he might truſt in the Fleſh*, and have a good Opinion of himſelf, *I more.* I have (as before I had) more to ſay than moſt Men have. I have greater Cauſe than they to truſt in the Righteouſneſs of the Law, for *I was Circumciſed the 8th Day*; *I am of the Stock of* Iſrael, *of the Tribe of* Benjamin, an honourable and famous Tribe, I am *an Hebrew the Hebrews* (ours is no upſtart or mungrel Family, we can derive our Pedegree from worthy Anceſtors of Jewiſh Lineage): Beſides, *as touching the Law, I was a Phariſee*, I was one of the ſtricteſt Sects of Religion among the *Jews.* I was no Prophane and Atheiſtical *Sadducee*, I was no demure, Fantaſtick and Enthuſiaſtic *Eſſen*, I was no factious and giddy-headed *Herodian*, but I was adopted into the Diſcipline of thoſe Grave and ſober Profeſſors of Judaiſm, the *Phariſees*, who were celebrated for the Auſterity of their Lives, and were exact Obſervers of the whole Law. *Concerning Zeal* (if any Man enquires what I was as to that) *I Perſecuted the Church*, I thought for my Part I did God Service in doing ſo. And *as touching the Righteouſneſs which is in the Law, I was blameleſs.* I did all I was bid to do, and I attained (as I imagin'd) to a Perfect and compleat Righteouſneſs. Theſe were my Apprehenſions *then*; but *now* I am of another Mind and perſwaſion. I have nothing to boaſt of, and indeed never had. *What things was Gain to me* (as he proceeds in the 7th *v.*) that is, what I really ſuppoſed to be Gain and Advantage to me, *thoſe have I counted Loſs for Chriſt.* Since I have been converted, I have no Eſteem of them. *Yea doubtleſs and I do count all things but Loſs for the Exeellency of the Knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord, for whom I have ſuffred the loſs of all Things, and do count them but Dung that I may win Chriſt.* Here is the Man Chang'd in his Judgment! He hath far different Thoughts from what he had.

THOSE Words therefore of St. *Paul* are remarkable, Rom. xii. 2. *Be ye transformed by the renewing of your Minds, that ye may prove what is that Good and acceptable and perfect Will of God.* Here is firſt laid down the Doctrine which I am treating of, the Change that is wrought in the Minds of the Regenerate; there is a *Renewing of the Mind:* And then there is particularly expreſſed the Manner of it: It muſt be by *Proving* or *Trying what is the Will of God*: It diſcovers itſelf by a right Judging and Diſcerning concerning things. There is a Change in the Apprehenſion and Judgment, in the Thoughts and Contemplations of every Regenerate Soul. Theſe are renew'd and rectified. Vain Thoughts no longer lodge in them, that is, continue and dwell in them, although they may often enter into the Soul. The new Birth *brings into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Chriſt*, 2 Cor. x. 5. The Cogitations are terminated on divine and heavenly Objects, the Meditations are fixed on God, and another World: And in ſhort, all the intellectual Acts of the Soul are wonderfully regulated and reformed.

SO much for the firſt Particular, *viz.* the *Change* of the *intellectual Powers.* For as we read, that in the Creation of the World, *Light* was the firſt-born of Beings, ſo the firſt Thing that is wronght in the ſanctified and regenerate Perſon is ſpiritual Light. The Underſtanding is illuminated, ſo that it is able to ſee the Things of God, and to diſcern the Excellency of Grace, and to underſtand the Myſtery of the Kingdom of God. The Underſtanding is pure and clear and like a ſpotleſs Mirrour repreſents the Images of Things fair and entire; upon which follows the Regulating of the Will. For as the Underſtanding ſees and diſcerns what is Good, ſo the elective Faculty readily complies with it, and obeys it: And thus the Heart is made conformable to the holy and divine Commands, and becomes a Tranſcript of the Law of God. This then is that which I muſt add.

2*dly*, THERE muſt be not only a Change of the Underſtanding but of the *Will.* And indeed the Will moſt commonly following the Dictates of the Underſtanding, when *this* is Renewed and Sanctified, *that* will forthwith be ſo too. Then that Faculty which before was Perverſe and obſtinate, will now become Pliant and Flexible; it will be ſo tamed and ſubdued that it will readily ſubmit to the Yoke of Chriſt, and obey his Will as the only Rule of a Chriſtian's Life. It will chearfully Imbrace the offers of Grace, it will heartily cloſe with the Tenders of the Goſpel, it will willingly comply with the Motions and Suggeſtions of the Holy Spirit. The *Will* is the great Ruler of men's Actions and Lives, therefore it is neceſſary that this ſhould be Sanctfied and Renewed that it may freely chooſe what is Good, and readily eſchew what is Evil. Whilſt the Men of the World cry out *who will ſhew us any Good*? Meaning thereby ſome Temporal and worldly good Thing, this will prompt a regenerate Perſon to breath out his Inclinations thus, *Lord lift thou up the Light of thy Countenance upon us*, Pſalm iv. 6. This will make him (with the Pſalmiſt) *chooſe the way of Truth*, Pſalm cxix. 30. This will effectually ſtir him up to make God his ultimate End, to make Choice of Heaven before Earth, and Chriſt before All. There muſt be a Change in this Faculty of Man, for all holy Purpoſes and Reſolutions depend upon and iſſue from This; and This (as I have intimated already) is the Source and Fountain of all humane Actions. Regeneration is chiefly ſeated in the Will, becauſe the Willing of Good (and not the bare Knowing of it) denominates a good Man, And God accepts of this, when many other things are wanting and defective. This oftentimes makes amends for them all. We have Reaſon then (you ſee) to place Regeneration in a thorough Change of the *Will.*

3*dly*. THE *Affections* likewiſe muſt be Changed. And truly when the Will hath receiv'd a new Biaſs and Propenſion, all the Affections of the Mind will ſoon be terminated on other Objects, and move and act very regularly and orderly. *I have turned my Feet unto thy Teſtimonies*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *Pſalm* cxix. By *Feet*, there are ſome pious Expoſitors underſtand the *Affections*: They are (ſay they) as it were the Feet of the Soul; by them we act with great Quickneſs and Celerity, and even *run the ways of God's Commandments*, as the ſame Pſalmiſt expreſſeth it. Or, theſe may be called the great Wheels and Springs of Action in the Soul; by theſe the ſpiritual Motion is expedited, by theſe it is marvellouſly promoted and haſtned. Briefly to ſhew that where the *new Creation* is wrought in the Soul, there are *new Affections*, Firſt, I will mention that *new Love*, which is the Great and Maſter-Wheel of all. The carnal and ſenſual Love is ſtifled and ſuppreſſed, and a Diviner Flame a celeſtial Love warms and cheers the Heart. Whereas a Man before was inordinately in Love with the World and the Things of it, and impetuouſly and paſſionately followed after them, and was never ſatiated with his Purſuit; now *God* is loved entirely, now what ever belongs to *him*, and bears *his* Image is moſt affectionately imbraced by the Soul. He that feels the regenerating Grace of the Spirit on his Heart, reverences, reſpects and loves thoſe who reſemble God, and who diſcover the God-like Nature in their Actions and Lives. The Reaſon is, becauſe true Grace and Goodneſs in others, is always prized and loved by thoſe that are ſincerely good themſelves, and indeed by no others. He that is really good and holy will value thoſe that are ſo; eſpecially the *Miniſters* of Chriſt, who have been ſerviceable to the ſaving of his Soul. For if Men love and honour their natural Parents, they have much greater Reaſon, to ſhew their affectionate Regards to their Fathers in Chriſt, who have begotten them to a lively Faith, and all other ſaving Graces by the Seed of the Word. This is a certain Maxim, he that is born again, loveth thoſe eſpecially, who were made Inſtruments of his new Birth.

THUS thoſe Converts, who found the Regenerating Principle beginning to work upon them, ſhew'd their Kindneſs and Reſpect to the Apoſtles (who before they hated, but had been now Inſtrumental towards their Converſion) in Terms of

Civility, and Compellations of Reſpect and Indearment. *Men and Brethren, and Sirs, what ſhall we do to be ſaved?* The Time was when they would not allow them the Title of *Men:* They thought them to be Beaſts and Monſters, not fit to live among Men. But now there is a Change wrought: The Compellation is *Men*, yea *Brethren*, that is, Perſons that we are endeared to, and have an Affection for. Men in their Unregeneracy bear an Averſeneſs in their Minds to all that are Good, eſpecially to thoſe that are the faithfulleſt Embaſſadors of Chriſt, and preach the Word of God ſincerely, and rouze Men out of the Sleep of Sin. What do theſe *buſy Clerks* mean, ſay they? Cannot they let us alone and ſuffer us to be quiet? They love to hear themſelves talk; but we hate it as much, and wiſh the whole Tribe of them were ſilenced Miniſters. Thus they reproach the Diſpenſers of the Goſpel, they miſconſtrue all they ſay and do; and in brief, are profeſſed Enemies to them. But if ever they be wrought upon by the Spirit of Grace through the Miniſtry of God's Word, and the Diſpenſing of the Goſpel, then they ſet an Eſtimate on Things and Perſons after another Rate: Then they reſpect and honour the Guides and Inſtructors of Souls; yea then *they count them worthy of double Honour, who labour in the Word and Doctrine*, who are careful to win Souls to Chriſt, who make it their Buſineſs to convince and convert impenitent Sinners, and to form Chriſt in the Hearts of Men. Then they are loving and affectionate to them, and demonſtrate it by all Ways imaginable. Thus you ſee how a Man's *Love* and *Hatred* are *Changed*. The regenerate Perſon loves and delights in that, which before was odious and deteſtable to him: And he hates and abhors that, which once was pleaſant and delightful to him. That which he once liked and approved of, he now deteſts and abominates, namely, all Sin and Wickedneſs.

I MIGHT ſhew alſo, how *other Affections* become New in a regenerate Perſon. He hath a new *Fear* implanted in him, a Fear of God, and ſuch a Fear of him, as is not inconſiſtent with the forenamed Affection of *Love:* For to fear God, ſo as to delight in him, and to keep his Commandments, our Saviour makes one Token of *loving* of God. Moreover, a new *Grief* and *Sorrow* poſſeſſes every regenerate Mind. The only Thing that procures Regret and Remorſe, Mourning and Anguiſh is the Sight and Senſe of Sin, and of offending and diſpleaſing God. And as there is a new *Sorrow*, ſo there is a new *Joy* in all thoſe happy Souls, who have felt the Grace of God truly influencing upon them. They rejoice in the only Object of true Gladneſs, which is the Favour of God, and the Light of his Countenance. Again, there are new *Hopes*, new *Wiſhes*, new *Deſires* in them, according to that devout Language of the Pſalmiſt; *Pſal.* lxxiii. 25. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I deſire beſides thee.* And that is another very affectionate Strain, *Pſalm* xlii. *As the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, ſo panteth my Soul after thee O God.* Which ſhews the new Temper of regenerate Souls. Whereas before they were ſtrongly enclined to what was earthly and carnal, and were drawn with a huge and almoſt irreſiſtible impetuoſity towards theſe as their Center. Now that magnetick Touch is taken off, and nothing is become attractive but Heaven, and the Intereſt of their immortal Spirits in another World: All their worldly Deſires are now moderated and regulated. They wiſh for nothing, but only ſo far as it may be ſerviceable to the beſt Ends, as it may promote their ſpiritual Comfort, and tend to their eternal Happineſs.

THIS is to be adjoined alſo, that a new *Anger* accompanies the new State and Condition of that Man who is born again. He is not, as heretofore, Inflamed with Wrath and Choler upon every unneceſſary Occaſion: And when there is a real Occaſion for this Paſſion, he is *angry* in ſuch a manner as *he Sins not*; he breaks not forth into raſh, immoderate, indiſcreet, unchriſtian Wrath. The inordinacy of this Paſſion is cured: And as for the main Part of his Life, he practices Meekneſs and Gentleneſs. Yea, though before he was of a fierce and furious Nature, yet now he ſhews himſelf mild and tractable. Grace doth ſweeten the harſheſt Natures, and mollifies the moſt obdurate Tempers. *The Wolf dwells with the Lamb, and the Leopard lies down with the Kid; and the Calf and the young Lion, and the Fatling together, and a little Child may lead them.* Thus St. *Paul* before his Converſion was a moſt vehement Perſecutor, breathing out nothing but Slaughter and Revenge, making Havock of the Church; but when he was turned to the Lord, this boiſterous and cruel Nature left him, and now he is become gentle and mild, loving and tender-hearted. *Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not? I am become all Things to all Men*, is his ſoft and compaſſionate Language. And ſo I might ſhew it in *proud* and *haughty* Perſons, in the *laſcivious* and *unclean*, in the *worldly* and *earthly minded*, that when they turn to God, their former Nature and Diſpoſition are altered, and tho' they retain the ſame Affections as to the *general* Nature of them, yet they are alter'd as to their *Objects*. Thus, whereas St. *Paul* with Zeal perſecuted the Servants of God, and committed the greateſt Outrages, yet when he felt a regenerating Principle in him, his Zeal was of another kind, for he was (what he bid others be) *zealouſly affected in a good Cauſe*.

THIS is that mighty *Alteration* which you will certainly find in your *Affections*, if you have attained to the new Birth. Your Sorrow will be ſpent on Sin, your Joy and Delight will be laid out on God and Holineſs; your Love will be fixed on that which alone deſerves it; your Hatred will be terminated on that which God abhors. Your fear will be left you provoke God; and you will be heartily angry with nothing but Vice and Wickedneſs: And ſo all the other Sallyings of the Soul, (either of the *concupiſcible* or *iraſcible Faculties*, as the Schools call them) will be duly governed and directed, and they will follow the Conduct of thoſe two Principles before named, to wit, an enlightned Underſtanding, and a rectified Will. And from theſe three doth naturally reſult a hearty and earneſt Endeavour of *living well*.

WHICH brings me to the Conſideration of the next Particular which I propounded, and ſo I ſhall compleat the Character of the *new Man* or *ſpiritual Regeneration*. Hitherto I have ſpoken of the Change of the *Soul* only: Now in the laſt Place I muſt add, that there muſt be a Change, an exceeding great Change in the *Life* and *outward Actions*, in the *Manners* and *Behaviour*. For the Principle being chang'd, the Operations will be ſo too. The Heart, which is the Spring of all outward and viſible Actions, being renewed and ſanctify'd, there will follow an open and apparent Exerciſe of all Godlineſs. *The Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation will teach us to deny Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly and godlily*, which comprehends the whole Duty of Man both towards God, and his Neighbour, and himſelf. The moſt gainful and the moſt pleaſureable Vices will now be quitted with Eaſe, and there will be a ready and univerſal Obedience to all the Commands of our Redeemer: But more eſpecially, the regenerate Soul will concern itſelf in theſe evangelical, and I may ſay proper, Duties of Chriſtianity, *viz.* Self-denial, walking circumſpectly, abſtaining from all Appearance of Evil, imitating our Lord in all the admirable Inſtances of his Life which fall under Imitation. As Regeneration denotes an inward Habit and new Principle of Life, ſo it comprehends the outward Acts and Works, which proceed from ſuch a Habit. As the new Birth advances our Natures, and reſtores us to the primitive Temper, ſo it poliſhes our Manners, and viſibly diſplays itſelf in our Lives. The Soul being chang'd, the Converſation muſt be ſo too. For make the Tree good, and the Fruit will be good. If the Underſtanding, Will and Affections be rectified, the Works which iſſue from them cannot but be of the like Nature. The bodily Actions will follow the Temper of the Soul.

AND it is neceſſary that the Life and outward Actions be dedicated to God and Holineſs, as well as the internal Faculties. The Body ought to be ſanctified, no leſs than the Mind: God requires the Service of the former, as well as the latter, as he redeem'd one as well as the other. The entring of *Souls* into *new Bodies*, after their Diſſolution, was the fond Dream of *Pythagoras*'s Scholars; and this (as I told you) was call'd by them ϖαλιγγενεσία *being born again*: But though this be a fanciful and groundleſs Opinion, yet this is a real Truth, that the regenerate Soul muſt be cloathed as 'twere with a new Body: The fleſhly Part muſt be chang'd and alter'd, and the corporeal and outward Actions muſt exceedingly differ from what they were. The Apoſtle prays in behalf of the *Theſſalonians* that their *Bodies*, as well as *Souls* and *Spirits*, *may be ſanctified and preſerved blameleſs to the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Theſſ. v. 23.

THE *Words* and *Speeches* (which may juſtly be reckon'd as bodily Acts) are to be duly look'd after. All Nations are known and diſtinguiſhed by their peculiar Language: The Saints likewiſe are by theirs. Thoſe that are true *Iſraelites*, and belong to the Land of Promiſe, ſpeak the Language of *Canaan*. You may diſcern them by their Speech and Dialect: 'Tis recorded of our Saviour, (*Acts* i. 3.) that he ſhewed himſelf to his Diſciples after his Paſſion, by many infallible Proofs, and particularly by *ſpeaking to them of the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God*. And this was not only after his Reſurrection, but through the whole Courſe of his Life; for 'tis related by the Evangeliſt St. *Luke* that his Speech was ſuch, that they *wondered at the gracious Words, which proceeded out of his Mouth*, Chap. iv. 22. This is the true *Shiboleth*, to diſcern regenerate Perſons from thoſe that are not: Theſe cannot pronounce and ſpeak the Words which the others do. *Theſe are of the World, therefore ſpeak they of the World*, as St. *John* rightly obſerves in his 1 *Epiſtle ch.* iv. 5. If you have put on the new Man, you will have new Words and Diſcourſes: *The corrupt Communication* (as the Apoſtle ſtiles it) *Eph.* iv. 29. will no longer *proceed out of your Mouths*, but *that Communication which is read to the Uſe of Edifying, that it may miniſter Grace to the Hearers*.

But though *Words* in a larger and comprehenſive Senſe are bodily Acts, and are ſo interpreted in our Laws, yet I will rather mention here thoſe which are ſtrictly called *Actions*, *viz.* all external and viſible Enterprizes, Endeavours, Works and Performances. Theſe are deſervedly reckon'd as neceſſary Tokens, and Fruits of a regenerate Nature: Our outward Actions muſt ſhew us to be new born. New Actions, yea contrary ones to thoſe which we did before, are the Effects of the new Creation in us. *Paul* perſecuted the Church before his Converſion: Afterwards he labour'd more abundantly for its Good and Welfare. If you will conſult *Acts* xvi. you will meet with a very ſignal Inſtance of this Nature. In *v.* 23, 24. you read, that the Jaylor took St. *Paul* and *Silas* into Cuſtody, and uſed them roughly; for having a Charge given him to *keep them ſafely*, (which might ſignify no more then Confinement, and not ſuffering them to go abroad) he reſolved to ſtretch the Charge to the utmoſt Extent of it, and accordingly thruſt them into the *inner Priſon*, he clapt them into the *Dungeon*; that would not ſuffice, but moreover *he made their Feet faſt in the Stocks*, having firſt loaded them with Shackles (which I gather from this, becauſe it is ſaid, that when the great Earthquake happened, *every one's Bands were looſed*: It ſeems then they were bound, which implies Chains, Fetters or Shackles). The Jaylor was reſolved he would ſecure them from gadding abroad; and it is likely, that in other Points he was diſcourteous and ſevere to them. As *Ignatius* ſaid of his Keeper and Guards, * The more he obliged them, the worſer they were, ſo is it oftentimes with this ſort of Men, fair Words and civil Deportment are recompenſed with the greater Auſterity and Cruelty.

But no ſooner was the Keeper converted, but his Words and Actions diſcovered him to be another Man, as you may read from *v.* 29. to the 35th. *He came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas.* He that had ſhew'd himſelf ſo ſurly and rude, proſtrated himſelf in the moſt humble Manner at the Feet of theſe holy Men, and he *brought them out* forthwith, and *ſaid, Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved?* What Names he faſtned before upon theſe holy Priſoners you may gueſs, for he that handled them ſo roughly, without doubt treated them as unkindly with his Tongue.

We may ſuppoſe him ſpeaking thus to them, after they had been ſome Hours in his Cuſtody, and had given ſome Specimen of their Behaviour? "What make
" you here a couple of lewd *Caitiffs?* Do you preſume to *ſing* in my Priſon,
" when you have more reaſon to howl and lament? What ſort of ſober Ranters
" have I got here? Do you think I can get my Livelihood by taking in of poor
" Vagrants and Beggars? My Keys will not turn at this rate. What, do you make
" account to pay your Fees with a Song? I do not care for ſuch ſorry Cuſtomers
" as you are. Could not your own Country hold you? Is not *Judea* big enough
" for you, you circumciſed Varlets, you *Hebrew* Vagabonds, you wandring *Jews*,
" you Scum and Off-ſcouring of the World? What ails you that you muſt run up
" and down the Countries *preaching*, as you call it? There is a Pack of bawling
" Fellows of you, that run a madding after the *Goſpel*, ſo I think your
" Folks call it. But I am glad your Journey is ſtopt, and ſince you can't keep
" out of a Jail, I am glad that mine ſhall hold ſuch factious Wretches, ſuch ſcan-

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* Ἐυεργετούμενοι χείρους γίγνονται.

" dalous Runagades, ſuch praying and ſinging Hypocrites, ſuch beggarly Goſpellers as you and your Gang are. You take Delight in ſuffering for your
" Maſter, that crucify'd Malefactor. If you love Suffering, you ſhall have enough
" of it. If Stripes and Fetters, if a dark Dungeon, if Hunger and Hardſhip will
" pleaſe you, you ſhall not want them. I will make you, and all ſuch Peſts and
" Plagues of the World weary of coming into this ſide of the Country again."
After ſuch a rude and reproachful Manner, you may well ſuppoſe this Jaylor treated the Apoſtles, and no better Language could be expected from him.

But now obſerve how the *Stile* is altered, having ſome Convictions upon his Mind (as the Forerunner of his Converſion) 1. He addreſſed himſelf to the Apoſtles in a humble Guiſe, *Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved?* O you honourable, worthy and excellent Perſons, tell me how I muſt eſcape the Damnation of Hell. " Oh *Sirs*, Oh the moſt valuable and acceptable Perſons alive,
" the only Men that I love and honour, ſhew me the Way to Life everlaſting.
" O vouchſafe to have pity upon me, and to help and relieve me in this my
" miſerable Condition. O ye dear Saints and Servants of the moſt High, O ye
" Friends of God, and choiſe Favourites of Heaven, be pleas'd to direct me,
" and tell me what I am to do. Though I have been unmerciful and unkind
" to you, yet I beſeech you be not you ſo to me. I have hurt and wounded your
" Bodies, but do you be charitable to my Soul.

And when the Work of Grace had further influenced on this Man's Heart, he gave greater Evidences of it in his Actions. Then (as you read in ver. 33.) he moſt officiouſly dreſſed their Wounds, he *waſhed their Stripes*. And to this charitable Waſhing an other more ſolemn and ſacred one was added, for 'tis ſaid that *he was baptized, he and all his ſtraitways*. And the next Verſe acquaints us that he refreſhed theſe ſtarved Priſoners with *Meat*. Having ſtopt the Mouths of their Wounds, he took care that their own ſhould be filled: When he had brought them into his Houſe, he ſet Meat before them, and rejoiced to ſee ſuch good Gueſts at his Table. " Welcome (ſaith he) my beſt Friends
" that ever I was acquainted with. I beſeech you forgive the rude and booriſh
" Language which I uſed to you. Forget (I intreat you) my harſh Dealings
" with you. But, oh, I ſhall never forget the raviſhing Melody of your *Pſalms*
" which you ſung. I rejoice that that Muſick drowned the harſh Noiſe of your
" Fetters. O the *Dungeon* that you were in? That now I reckon the beſt and
" choiceſt Room in all my Priſon. Your Preſence hath graced that dark Du-
" rance and even bleſſed and hallowed the whole Priſon. Happy Man am I
" that ever ſaw your Faces! And happy you whom God ſent hither for my
" real Advantage! In ſhort this Man uſed his Priſoners kindly and obligingly, and ſo mended that Fault he was guilty of as Jaylor: And moreover, he had all his Houſhold baptized, and therein acted the Part of a good chriſtian *Maſter of a Family*. This was the *Change* which was obſervable in the converted Jaylor. His *Actions* (as well as his Words) were new, yea contrary to what they were before. And ſo it muſt be in every regenerate Perſon.

I Might adjoyn this alſo, that *new Company* is the Attendant of the new Birth. The Man who is effectually changed by the Grace of God's Spirit, abandons all vain, unprofitable and wicked Society. The Meaning is that though (as being in the World, and having Commerce with Perſons of all Kinds at one time or other) he muſt needs converſe with Men of vitious and unhallowed Lives; yet he holds no Familiarity with ſuch; he unwittingly mixes himſelf with them, but never complies with and conforms to their evil Manners. He ſeeks out for new Aſſociates, that is, Men of a godly and upright Life: When he lights on ſuch, he imbraces them entirely. He delights in the Converſation of holy Men, and he is like *David*, a *Companion of thoſe that fear God*, and obſerve his Laws.

I Could add likewiſe that the regenerate Perſon hath *new Ends* and *Deſigns:* For all Actions without right and due Ends are graceleſs and ſinful. Therefore whereas before he did his Works of Charity to be ſeen of Men, and performed all other Acts of Religion for ſiniſter and vile Purpoſes, for baſe and unworthy Ends, now he takes his aim right, he directs all his Actions to God's Glory and Honour, and takes care that every thing he doth ſhall be ſome ways ſerviceable to that great and excellent Deſign.

AND thus you ſee what is the *State of Grace* and *Regeneration.* You ſee what the *Change* is that is wrought in every one that is born again: And I have indeavour'd to give you a full Account of the true Nature of it in the ſeveral Particulars whereof it conſiſts. From which you may frame this Definition of *Regeneration*, viz. that it is a real Change of the whole Man from the Impurities of Sin to the Image of God wrought in us by the Holy Ghoſt. Or thus, it is a total Change both of the inward and outward Man from all Sin unto all Good. This is the Change which is to be found in every true Convert. It muſt be *general* and *univerſal*; as you cannot but gather from what I told you concerning the Nature of this Change: For it is to exert itſelf in our Underſtandings, in our Wills, and in our Affections, in our Thoughts, in our Words, and in our Actions. Not only the Tongue and Brain, but the Heart is concern'd; not only the Heart, but the Life. Whereas there was before an habitual Propenſion to Evil, now there is a Habit of Good or habitual Grace wrought in the Soul. And indeed this is it which chiefly denominates a Man holy, juſt and good. It is not the Act, but the fixed Habit which makes a holy Perſon to be really accounted ſuch.

AN *inward Change* in the *Heart*, then, is the firſt thing in Regeneration. True Converſion begins there; and conſequently the Frame and Diſpoſition of the Man is altered, the inward Inclination and Bent of his Soul are changed: Then it is no Wonder that Holineſs is become his very Nature and inherent Temper.

AND now next you may eaſily conceive how the *Life* and *Manners* of ſuch a Perſon will be renewed and reformed. Inward Grace in the Heart will make him abſtain from outward Acts of Sin. If there be a regenerate Principle within, his whole Life will diſcover the Influence of it. The new Temper and Complexion which the Soul hath received, will diſplay itſelf in new Actions. There never was true Regeneration wrought in any Man, but it ſhewed itſelf in his Converſation and Practice, if he had *Time* to ſhew it. Where there is the new Birth, there is always an Abandoning of our old Sins. The regenerate State is an external Change, for it is Leaving off a worſe Life to live a better and a holy Life. A true Convert becomes a viſible Upholder of Religion and Piety. He is every ways uſeful and ſerviceable in his whole Life. *Oneſimus* in Times paſt was *unprofitable*, ſaith the Apoſtle: But now (I having begotten him again in my Bonds) *he is become profitable*, Epiſ. x. 11. to *Philemon.* Now he truly anſwers his *Name*, for *Oneſimus* in the *Greek* is as much as *profitable*, now he is a uſeful Perſon to thee and me, and to all he converſeth with. This is true of every Convert, of every regenerate Man; whereas before he was uſeleſs, and there was no Profit of his Life, now he lets the World ſee that he is every ways Beneficial, and that, wherever he comes, there is ſome ſpiritual Advantage got by him. Whereas before he was led away with every fooliſh Luſt, and yielded to all the Aſſaults and Temptations of the Devil, and was ſeduced by the World's Baits and Allurements; now he with great Induſtry and Watchfulneſs ſtands upon his Guard and oppoſes the Sollicitations of theſe ghoſtly Enemies. He curbs his carnal Appetite and fleſhly Luſts, he manfully reſiſts the Temptations of Satan, and he ſtrongly withſtands the Inveiglements of the vain World. He ſubdues the *Fleſh*, which once ſubdued him; he repels the *Devil*, who heretofore foiled him; and he vanquiſhes the *World*, which formerly captivated him, 1 *John* v. iv. *He that is born of God overcometh the World.* He who knows what the new Birth means, hath attained to that ſpiritual *Conqueſt.* And thus it appears that it was rightly inſerted into the Definition of *Regeneration*, that it is a total and univerſal Change. It muſt ſpread itſelf through all the Faculties of the Soul, and it muſt exert its Virtue and Power in all the bodily Actions and in the whole Courſe of this Life. The Heart muſt be purified, and the Converſation reformed. The Mind muſt think otherwiſe than it did: The Mouth muſt ſpeak, the Hand muſt act otherwiſe: The whole Man muſt appear in another Shape: There muſt be a thorough Renovation Reſtauration, both of Minds and Manners.

AND I muſt add this alſo, that this total Change muſt be *ſincere*, and devoy'd of all Hypocriſy. Remember you muſt turn from Sin unto God, not from one Sin to another. Your Actions ought to be *renew'd*, not to be *ſhifted* only. I have been diſcourſing of the new Birth; but do not pleaſe yourſelves with an hypocritical Shew of Newneſs of Life, as the new Moon hath a new Face and Appearances, but the ſame old Spots remain ſtill in her. Content not yourſelf with a feigned and counterfeit Newneſs, with a mere Shadow and Shew of Renovation. Be careful that you be true and real, upright and Sincere. Change not one Vice for another, but throw off all, and entirely turn unto God. Before you were regenerate, carnal and ſenſual Objects were your only Solace and Delight; but now let your Minds find Satisfaction in the Things that are divine and ſpiritual. Before you were fixed upon Earth: Now let Heaven be your Aim. Before the fading Things of this Life were your chief Entertainment and Pleaſure: Now let the Glory of Eternity and a better Life influence on your Actions. In a Word, before Sin prevailed; but now let Grace rule and reign in you, and render your Lives active for God and his Glory.

BUT I muſt *particularly* and *more cloſely* urge this important Doctrine which I have been treating of. And that is the Task which I will undertake in the remaining Part of my Diſcourſe. Theſe four *Inferences* are the Sum of all. 1. Be ſenſible of this important Truth, that there muſt be a great Change wrought in every Perſon that is regenerate. 2dly, If Regeneration be ſo great a Change as I have repreſented it to be, then be not miſtaken about it, but try and examine whether you have attain'd to it in Reality. 3dly, If upon Examination you find that this Change is not wrought in you, then endeavour to haſten out of your unregenerate State with all the ſpeed imaginable: And here I will ſhew you what Helps you muſt make Uſe of. But 4thly, if upon Examination you find this new Birth, this regenerate Principle wrought in you, rejoice and be exceeding glad.

THE *Firſt Inference*, I ſay, is this, be *ſenſible*, exceeding ſenſible of this important Truth which I have been treating of, *viz.* that there muſt be a great Change made in you. You muſt be new Men if you ever hope to enter into the new Jeruſalem. *Except you be born again, you cannot ſee the Kingdom of God.* Regeneration I have ſhew'd is an habitual and actual Change of a Man, whereby are produced new Habits of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, and whereby alſo new Acts are exerted: So that of Neceſſity the Man's Life muſt be chang'd. Bear then this upon your Minds, that there muſt be a remarkable and viſible Change in your Converſations. There muſt be a Reformation in your Underſtandings, Wills, Affections, and Practices. All muſt be new. Let me read to you thoſe Words in 2 *Cor.* iii. 18. and briefly deſcant upon them, *We all with open Face beholding, as in a Glaſs, the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Mark here a glorious Change in Believers! They are changed into the *Image* and *Similitude of Chriſt.* A Saint is like his Saviour. But how is this wondrous Change brought to paſs. Obſerve 1. The Means and Inſtrument of it. It is effected by *beholding, as in a Glaſs, that glorious Image* and Repreſentation of Chriſt. The Goſpel is called a *Glaſs:* It is clear and perſpicuous, and fully repreſents and reveals to us the glorious Image of Chriſt Jeſus. It ſhews the exact Lineaments of that olny and juſt One. 2*dly,* Obſerve not only the Inſtrument but the Author of this Change, *the Spirit of the Lord.* It is his Grace only that makes the Change It is the *Spirit* that makes a regenerate Perſon differ from an unregenerate one. 3dly, Take notice of the Degrees that are in this Change, it is *from Glory to Glory,* the Meaning is, it is not all at once, but by certain Steps. Thus this place of Scripture ſets forth the glorious Change with the manner of it, which is to be found in all thoſe that are born again. They are not like other Men, yea they are not like themſelves, that is, what they were heretofore.

PRETEND not then that you are *regenerate Perſons,* and the Children of God, and born again, and yet the ſame time live as the wicked do. When Chriſt comes into the Soul, when regenerating Grace poſſeſſes the Mind and all its Powers and Faculties, the Man is not the ſame that he was. He may truly ſay as one did in the like Caſe, *Ego non ſum ego,* I am not the Man that I once was: I am quite another kind of Perſon. My former Vices are laid aſide, my old Sins are done away and a new Spirit and Frame of Heart is introduced: Yea all Things are become new. Regenerate Perſons walk Antipodes to themſelves (that is, what they were once), and they tread counter to the wicked World.

Whereas before they delighted in all Vice and Vanity, they deſpiſed the Ways of God and Goodneſs, and hated to be reformed; now they feel in themſelves a vehement Deſire and Love of Goodneſs, and an unfeigned Purpoſe to conform themſelves to the whole Will of God, a Delighting in his Laws, and Rejoicing in doing his Commandments. This is the Effect of the *new Birth*, which always changes Mens Tempers. It was notably ſaid by *Lactantius*, * Bring me (ſaith he) a Man that is addicted to Anger, and I will make him as gentle as a Lamb: “ Or let him be covetous, and I will ſtraitway make him bountiful: If he be timorous, he ſhall become courageous: Is he an Adulterer? He ſhall ſoon be chaſt: Or if he be cruel, he ſhall become merciful: If unjuſt, he ſhall be made a Man of ſingular Juſtice and Uprightneſs. *Philoſophy* cannot do this ſaith he, but *Chriſtianity* hath this Force and Virtue to change Mens Tempers and Converſations. The Doctrine of Chriſt and the Precepts of the Goſpel are able to effect this. Thus this *Primitive Chriſtian* boaſted of the Power and Virtue of the Goſpel. It ſeems in thoſe Days there was a viſible and apparent Alteration made in Mens Lives when they once took upon them the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity: They felt a Power and Energy accompanying it. They ſeem'd not to be the ſame Perſons that they were before; ſo wonderful a Change was wrought in them.

* Da mihi virum qui ſit iracundus, *Inſtitut.* l. 3. c. 26.

OH that you would think of this! there ought to be the ſame Effect now that there was then. If true Grace hath ſeized on your Souls, if the regenerate Principle be in you, you will ſhew it by a new Life. There muſt be this great Metamorphoſis, which changes Earth into Heaven, Fleſh into Spirit, what is worldly and ſenſual into that which is ſpiritual and divine, what is deviliſh into that which is Godlike. Here is a miraculous Change indeed! This, this cauſes the Lame to walk, the Blind to ſee, the Dead to hear, the Lepers to be cleanſed, the Crooked to be made ſtreight, and even the Dead to riſe out of their Graves. The *new Birth* may juſtly be reckoned among the *miraculous* Acts of the Goſpel. That which I urge upon you is, that you would be *thoroughly perſuaded* of this Truth, and of the Neceſſity of it.

Secondly, THAT you may not miſtake about this weighty Matter, I deſire you to *try* and *examine* whether this great Change is to be found in you. There are many who can give no other Signs of their Regeneration and Sanctity but a Change of ſome former Notions and Opinions, a Taking up of new Tenents, an enjoying of ſome ſpiritual Privileges and Immunities, and the like: But alas theſe Perſons are moſt groſly miſtaken. They prize and value themſelves upon that which will do them no real Good. For what ſaith the Apoſtle? [*In Chriſt Jeſus neither Circumciſion availeth any thing nor Uncircumciſion but a new Creature*], Gal. vi. 15. The new Creature, the new Birth, the ſpiritual Regeneration, (ſuch as I have deſcribed it to be) theſe only are available; and what ever elſe you attain to, if you attain not to this, you cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, but your State is moſt miſerable and deplorable. *Circumciſion* availeth nothing; *Circumciſion*, which was of the greateſt and higheſt Account among the People of God, this availed nothing; though 1. It was of divine Appointment. God himſelf commanded it; yet becauſe it was but a temporary and arbitrary Injunction, and was to continue but for a Seaſon, it was unavailable in Chriſtianity. 2. Circumciſion availed nothing although it was the Seal of a Covenant between God and Man. But that Seal was to be changed for a new and better one, and ſo was of little Importance. 3. Circumciſion availed nothing although it was an eminent Mark of Diſtinction between the People of God (the holy Seed) and thoſe that were prophane, and Strangers to the Commonwealth of *Iſrael*. But becauſe it contained no real and inward Holineſs in it, and was no infallible Badge of Regeneration, it was of little Account in the Eyes of God. 4. Circumciſion availed nothing though it was intended to ſignify ſomething higher, *viz.* the Circumciſion of the Heart. But the bare Signification was of no Value, for there may be the Sign where the Thing ſignified is wanting.

THUS much I thought fit to offer to you in Explication of St. *Paul's* Words, [*Circumciſion availeth nothing*], all outward Rites and Ceremonies, Privileges and Prerogatives are of no Value. Neither doth *Uncircumciſion avail any thing* as the Apoſtle adds: Men are not to prize themſelves, and think themſelves regenerate and holy Perſons, and in the Favour of God, becauſe they make not

Uſe of ſuch and ſuch Rites and Cuſtoms, or becauſe they have outward Privileges of their own which are different, far from thoſe which others are uſed to. I tell you (ſaith the Apoſtle) *Uncircumciſion* will do us Chriſtians no Good at all. It is not our being freed and exempted from that bloody Rite that will any ways advantage us. Neither this nor any other Privilege which we enjoy will really avail us.

And here by Parity of Reaſon the Apoſtle includes theſe following Things, 1. *Baptiſm* availeth nothing, that is, the bare outward Waſhing or Sprinkling with Water hath no real Goodneſs and Excellency in it. This ſucceded Circumciſion, you know: Now, as he was not a *Jew* that was *one outwardly* (by this Sacrament only) ſo he is not a *Chriſtian* who is one thus outwardly only, by having an external Admiſſion into the Church of Chriſt, and bearing this outward Badge of a Chriſtian. Unleſs the Waſhing of Regeneration be added to the ſacramental Waſhing, this latter will be of no Effect.

2dly, No *ſpiritual Gifts* and *Indowments* (though very excellent and admirable) do avail any thing. Thoſe high Gifts and Accompliſhments of the Spirit reckoned up in 1 *Cor.* xii. viz. Speaking with all ſorts of Tongues, healing all Diſeaſes, working all ſorts of Miracles, extraordinary Prophecying, and other Gifts at that time beſtow'd on the Church; all theſe are unprofitable (I mean to the Owners of them) without inward Grace and Holineſs, an eminent Part of which is *Charity*, evangelical Love, which the Apoſtle excellently deciphers in that Chapter. What a vain Plea is that which ſome ſhall make at the laſt Day, *We have prophecy'd in thy Name, and in thy Name we have caſt out Devils*, Mat. vii. 12. But unleſs they could have added a holy Practice and Converſation to their Prophecying and Preaching, unleſs they could have caſt the Devil out of themſelves as well as others, my meaning is, unleſs they could have abandon'd the Works of the Devil, and attained to upright Hearts and holy Lives, unleſs they could effect this, all their Gifts and Endowments ſignified nothing. The ſame may be ſaid,

3dly. Of all *Knowledge* and *Learning*. It avails not without the new Birth: The profoundeſt Inſight into Things will ſtand you in no ſtead, if you be devoid of Grace. Though you know never ſo much, it will not be beneficial to you, unleſs there be a Renovation of your Minds by the Spirit of God. It was the old Complaint, the illiterate and unlearned riſe and take Poſſeſſion of Heaven, whilſt the great Doctors and *Rabbies* are thruſt down to Hell, with all their quaint Notions and elaborate Learning. If Grace doth not accompany Mens *Knowledge*, this bright and ſplendid Indowment may ſerve only to light them to the infernal Darkneſs, and the Regions of endleſs Wo and Miſery.

4thly. All the *Means of Grace*, and the Uſe of the Ordinances and Inſtitutions of Chriſt avail nothing, if the regenerate Principle be wanting. *Our* Preaching and Admoniſhing, *your* Hearing and Praying are very unprofitable Enterprizes, very uſeleſs Performances without this. Remember thoſe Words of our Saviour, in *Luke* x. 15. *Thou Capernaum, which art exalted to Heaven, ſhalt be thruſt down to Hell.* Thou who art exalted above other Nations, by thy having the Goſpel preached to thee, and who art by the Diſpenſation thereof as 'twere lifted up to Heaven; thou, becauſe thou art not changed and new born by this Seed of the Word, ſhalt be ſo far from receiving any Advantage by it, that thy Condition ſhall be ſo much the worſe, and more deplorable.

5thly. No *Diſtinctions* and *Parties* among Men (as in the Apoſtle's time ſome were for *Paul*, others for *Apollos*, and a third Diviſion for *Cephas*, that is, *Peter*): No little Differences of Sects and Models in Religion, not being of ſuch a Name, or ſuch an Order of Men, not being of ſuch a Church, none of theſe will avail any Thing. It is only real Godlineſs and true Grace that are acceptable to God, and can bring any Satisfaction to a rectified and enlightned Conſcience.

6thly and *laſtly*, It is not *outward and bodily Acts of religious Worſhip*, 'tis not Kneeling, Bowing, Lying proſtrate, 'tis not loud or long Prayers, 'tis not uſing outward Auſterity towards the Body, it is not uneaſy Poſture or ſevere Penances that will be found to be available. The *fooliſh Virgins* pray'd aloud, and begged hard, and yet were lock'd out. *Ahab* humbled himſelf, *Eſau* wept, *Judas* repented himſelf and made Reſtitution, and yet all theſe Perſons were far from being accepted of God. The Reaſon is this, which the Apoſtle here aſſigns, *viz.* that nothing at all can *avail us*, and really better us, but the *new Creature*. The regenerating Grace of God working a total Change in us, this alone is available under the Goſpel: See then that you be not deceived; think not that the ſeveral Things before-mentioned will be advantageous to you, unleſs a new Principle be implanted in you, and unleſs that powerfully influences on your Lives and Practices, and produces evangelical Obedience. I requeſt you to *try* and *examine* whether you have attained to this, and ſit not down contented with the Attainment only of thoſe other Gifts or Privileges, which I have named to you.

TO further your *Examination* of yourſelves, and to render it ſucceſsful, I ſhall here apply myſelf to the reſolving of this Difficulty, namely, how ſhall we know that we are of the Number of the Regenerate, ſeeing bad Men do ſome religious Actions, and good Men commit many Sins. And the Sins of the Regenerate and Unregenerate are deſcribed alike in ſome Places of Scripture, and are ſet forth by the ſame Expreſſions. Seeing then they *both* of them *ſin*, and *both* do ſome *religious Acts*, the Query is, how they differ as to theſe *two*. I will diſtinctly ſpeak of them, and

Firſt, As to the Difference of *regenerate* and *unregenerate* Perſons in reſpect of *Sin*, the former plainly differ from the latter. 1. In regard of what they do *before they fall into Sin*. 2. As to the *Act of Sin*. 3. In their *Behaviour after* the Commiſſion of Sin.

1. As to what is obſervable *before* Sin is committed, thoſe who are regenerate *do not intend* and *purpoſe*, do *not deſign* and *contrive*, as others do, the Breaking of God's Laws. The Frame and Tendency of their Minds is quite another Way, their Faces are towards Heaven, their main Purpoſe and Aim is to ſerve God, and do what is pleaſing to him: Therefore when they ſin, it is beſides their *Intention*, and the *Bent* of their Souls. But a wicked Man deſigns ſin, and lays Plots for the Commiſſion of it, and hath it always in his Thoughts and Intentions: Which makes him guilty of many more Sins, than he actually commits. Again, the Regenerate do carefully *ſhun the Occaſions* of Sin, and endeavour to *avoid all Opportunities*, which may adminiſter to it. But the Ungodly do not ſo; they look out for Opportunities of gratifying their Luſts and evil Deſires, and accompliſhing their unwarrantable Deſigns, and are very glad when they meet with them. There is this Difference likewiſe between theſe two Sorts of Perſons *before* they ſin, that the one ſeriouſly *reſolv'd* againſt it, but the other never doth any Thing of this Nature: They will not tie themſelves up by firm Reſolutions againſt it, and thereby they lay themſelves open and obnoxious to Satan's Temptations, the World's Enticements, and the Sollicitations of their own fleſhly Part. And this alſo I muſt add, that thoſe who have had Experience of the new and ſpiritual Birth do earneſtly and fervently *pray*, that they may be kept from falling into Sin, but thoſe of the other Character, never in good Earneſt make this their Requeſt to Heaven.

2. THERE is a vaſt Difference in the *Act of Sinning*, as well as *before* it. For the godly Man ſins with Reluctancy and Unwillingneſs, *He doth that which he wills not*, Rom. vii. 16. And therefore (as it there follows) *he conſents unto the Law, that it is good*. It is added in the ſame Place, *The Evil which he wills not, that he doth*, v. 19. And therefore 'tis truly ſaid, that *he delights in the Law of God, after the inward Man*, v. 22. Hence it is, that there is no *full Conſent* of his Will in ſinning; yea, he *ſtrives* and *contends againſt* Sin, and ſtruggles with it. He generally offends out of Incogitancy and Want of Conſideration, from ſudden Paſſion and Surprize: And even *when he ſleeps, his Heart wakes*. But it is otherwiſe with the Wicked, they are ſo far from Striving and Wreſtling with Sin, that they moſt readily and willingly comply with it: They chearfully entertain it, and embrace it with a plenary Conſent, and, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, ſin *with Greedineſs*.

3. BUT *after Sin committed*, there is yet a greater Difference between thoſe that are in the State of Grace, and thoſe that are not. The former uſe the Means for the Diſcovery of their Sin, and for Conviction of it: And to that End, they reject not the faithful Admoniſher and Reprover, and patiently liſten to him, and ſeek not out Diſtinctions and Evaſions to defend or excuſe themſelves, but they impartially judge and condemn themſelves. They have no Kindneſs for any known Vice, but as ſoon as they are convinced and perſuaded

that their Actions are diſpleaſing to God, they fly to his Mercy and humbly implore Pardon, and ſincerely repent of their Miſdoings. Phyſicians diſtinguiſh between a *Delirium*, which is a ſhort Madneſs, and a *Phrenſy*, which is long and continual. Sinning againſt God is of the firſt ſort, but Perſiſting in Sin is of the latter, and 'tis rare that any good Man is guilty of this extreme Madneſs. When God hath ſpoken Peace to his Soul, he doth not turn again to this Folly and Diſtraction: He doth not repeat his Sins, as the Wicked do. *Pharaoh*, when any of the *Plagues* were upon him, was willing to comply with *Moſes*'s Demands: But as ſoon as they were removed, he return'd to his former Reſolutions, and hardened his Heart, and behav'd himſelf obſtinately and rebelliouſly. This is very ſeldom found in thoſe that truly fear God: We do not read that *Noah* was drunk, or *David* committed Adultery any more than once; and tho' *Peter* was guilty of three diſtinct Acts of denying Chriſt, yet it may be ſaid to be but once, becauſe we do not read that he ever offended in that kind again. True Penitents reſume not the Vices, which they laid down: It is none of their Character to ſin frequently and ordinarily, and herein they differ from the Unregenerate.

AGAIN, 'tis inſeparable from them to complain of their Sins as their greateſt Evil, and to be ſenſible of them as their greateſt Miſery, and to deſire to be freed from them. Herein they are diſtinguiſh'd from all unſanctified Perſons, for theſe bemoan not their State, and groan not under their Guilt, and do not wiſh and long to be *delivered from the Body of this Death*, Rom. vii. 24. Moreover, the Uſe they make of their ſinning is different, for the Regenerate are humbled by it, and are made more wary and watchful. A Man that falls, will afterwards look more narrowly to his Steps. It is ſo with good Men, their Failings are ſerviceable to their future Vigilancy, and they apply themſelves to their Duty with greater Diligence than formerly. But they, whoſe Nature is not renew'd and chang'd, are hardned by ſinning, and become Slaves to Satan, and Sin *reigns in them, and hath Dominion over them:* Its Sway is irreſiſtible and uncontrolable, ſo that they cannot but ſin in all Things they do. The Difference, in ſhort, between the Godly and Wicked is this, that the one are a Field that bears a fruitful Crop, but hath ſome Weeds; the other are a Ground over-grown with Weeds, Briars and Thorns, and brings forth no good Fruit. The one are like the beſt Gold, that is not altogether free from Droſs; the other are nothing but Droſs. The former are ſometimes weak, ſickly and diſtemper'd, but the latter are *dead* in Treſpaſſes and Sins.

IT muſt needs be thus for ſuch *Reaſons* as theſe. *Firſt*, The Nature of *Regeneration* requires it: *Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit Sin*, 1 John iii. 9. and in the ſame Place, *He cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God.* As a Son is like his Father, ſo he being born of God reſembles God in Holineſs; and Sin cannot deface that Likeneſs. He is, as another inſpir'd Writer ſpeaks, *Partaker of the divine Nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. whereby he is like God, and thereby known to be his genuine Son. And therefore 'tis added in the aboveſaid Place, *v.* 10. *In this the Children of God are manifeſt, and the Children of the Devil.* The one are like to their heavenly Father, the other bear the Image of their Father the Devil.

ANOTHER Reaſon is inſerted in the forementioned Place, *for his Seed remaineth in him*, that is, the Virtue and Power of the Seed of Regeneration, namely, the Miniſtry of the Word, the Seed of the Goſpel abideth in him, and cannot be rooted out. When it hath once taken hold of the Soul, it can never be loſt. It is a Law written on the Heart, and cannot be blotted out. Accordingly St. *Peter* tells the Saints he writes to, that they *are born again, not of corruptible Seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever*, 1 Pet. i. 23. Which begets a ſpiritual Life in them that is not obnoxious to Decay, but is a fix'd and ſtable Principle, a confirmed Habit of Grace and Holineſs in them.

FURTHER, *The Anointing which they have receiv'd abideth in them*, 1 John ii. 27. And this is a conſtant Preſervative againſt the Commiſſion of Sin. *Walk in the Spirit, and ye ſhall not fulfill the Luſts of the Fleſh*, Gal. xv. 16. This *Law of the Spirit of Life makes them free from the Law of Sin*, Rom. viii. 2. *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is* this *Liberty*, 2 Cor. iii. 17. And the ſame Apoſtle tells us, that *as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the*

Sons of God, Rom. viii. 14. To be regenerated and to be conducted by the Spirit are inſeparable: And where-ever there is this Conduct, there is *the Fruit of the Spirit*, Gal. v, 22. which is not to be found in any unregenerate Perſon.

ANOTHER *Ground* of this Difference between the Converted and Unconverted is, that one is endued with that leading Principle of all Holineſs, *Faith*, but the other is not. *Whoſoever is born of God, overcometh the World: And this is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith*, 1 John v. 4. And this Conqueſt and Victory reaches not only to the World, but to Satan, and to our fleſhly Principle and corrupt Nature. For by Faith the evil Spirit is ſucceſsfully repell'd and vanquiſh'd, and the Heart is puriſy'd, and we are transform'd into the God-like Nature.

LASTLY, he that is regenerate is a *new Man*, a *new Creature*; and this muſt needs diſtinguiſh him from all thoſe who remain in their old and corrupt State, who know nothing of a Change in them.

HAVING ſhew'd how the Regenerate and Unregenerate differ as to *Sinning*, I will now very briefly ſhew, in the ſecond Place, how they differ as to all *Acts of Virtue* and *Religion*. For nothing is more evident than that unregenerate Men and Hypocrites *imitate* and *ape* the Graces of true Believers and holy Men. They advance ſo near ſometimes to theſe latter, that they are taken for them. It will be requiſite therefore to obſerve wherein they *agree*, and wherein they *differ:* As to the firſt, unconverted Perſons may have an Inſight into divine Truths, as well as a real Saint, *and underſtand all Myſteries, and all Knowledge*, 1. Cor. 13. 1. They may have been *once enlightned*, Heb. vi. 4. And have had clear Convictions of Sin, and been ſenſible of the Wrath of God due to them for it. They may make Confeſſion of their Sins, and have great Trouble and Remorſe of Conſcience, and attain to ſome Degrees of Repentance, as *Cain*, *Pharaoh*, *Saul*, *Ahab*, and even *Judas*. They may make Reſolves and Purpoſes of Amendment, *Ex.* xxiv. 3. *Jer.* xlii. 5. They may breathe out very ſerious Wiſhes and Deſires, as *Balaam* did, *Num.* xxiii. 10. They may frequently reſort to the Aſſemblies of God's People, and join in outward Communion with them: Like the Hypocritical *Iſraelites*, they may *draw near to God with their Mouth, and with their Lips honour him*, Iſai. xxix. 13. *They may ſeek God daily, and delight to know his Ways, and ask of him the Ordinances of Juſtice, and take Delight in approaching to God*, Iſai. lviii. 2. They may have a great Reſpect and Reverence for good Men, *as Herod fear'd John Baptiſt, and obſerved him*, Mark. vi. 20. That is, he carried himſelf very awfully and inoffenſively for a Time before him. They may have a high Eſteem of Preaching, and take Pleaſure in it: *The ſtony Ground receiv'd the Word with Joy*, Mat. xiii. 20. Thoſe Jews who never intended to practiſe what *John* the *Baptiſt* taught them, yet were delighted at firſt with his Doctrine, and (as our Saviour upbraids them) *were willing for a Seaſon to rejoice in it*, John v. 35. Yea, *Herod himſelf heard him gladly, and did many things*, Mark. vi. 20. Men in their unregenerate State may faſt, and pray, and be frequent in all the outward Exerciſe of Religion and divine Worſhip, and ſeem to be as zealous in all the Parts of it as the moſt ſanctified Perſon, as our Saviour tells us of the *Phariſees*. They may believe the Word of God with a temporary and hiſtorical Faith, they may profeſs the Goſpel, and aſſert and defend all the Doctrines of it. Yea, their Lives and Practices may in a great Meaſure be reform'd by it, and they may be free from all groſs and ſcandalous Vices, as the *Phariſee* boaſted that he was *no Extortioner or Adulterer, as ſome other Men*, Luke xviii. 11. They may be very obſervant of the external Parts of Obedience to the Law of God, they may be in great Repute for Acts of Juſtice and Charity, they may *beſtow all their Goods to feed the Poor*, yea, they may *give their Bodies to be burnt*, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. They may ſuffer Martyrdom for the Defence of Religion. In a Word, they may practiſe the external Part of all moral Virtues and evangelical Duties. Even Reprobates and Hypocrites can do all things, as to *outward Shew*, that the converted and truly Godly can do. Our Saviour hath ſum'd it up in ſhort when he ſaith, *They outwardly appear Righteous unto Men, but within are full of Hypocriſy and Iniquity*, Mat. xxiii. 28.

THUS far I have ſhew'd in what Reſpects the Regenerate and Unregenerate *do not differ*, but are like one another; now it remains that I aſſign the Particulars wherein the Former ſurpaſs the Latter, and are never imitated by them. *Firſt,* they have not only a ſpeculative and notional Knowledge of the Truths and Myſteries of the Goſpel, which ſome of the worſt Men have, but they underſtand them ſo as to have an affectionate Reliſh of them, and to guide their Lives by them, according to that of our Lord, *Thou haſt hid theſe things from the Wiſe and Prudent, and haſt revealed them unto Babes,* Mat. xi. 25. So reveal'd them as no others have them reveal'd to 'em, that is, for their real Good and Edification.

AGAIN, their Senſe and Conviction of Sin, their Confeſſion of it, and their Remorſe and Repentance for it proceed from their real Hatred of it, as it is the greateſt Evil in its own Nature, and as it is diſpleaſing to God: Which no other Perſons ever had or can have Experience of. Their Wiſhes and Reſolutions and Promiſes come from their Hearts, and therefore prove effectual. Their Belief of the Doctrines of the Goſpel is well-grounded, which makes it permanent and laſting. Their religious Exerciſes and Performances are Acts of the inward Man, of the Soul and Spirit, and from a deep Senſe of the Majeſty of him with whom they have to do. Their Obedience to the divine Commands is impartial and univerſal, and without Reſerve: It flows from a lively and active Faith, from a Love of God and their Duty, and from Sincerity of Heart. And laſtly they ſtrive to do all in a right Manner, and to a right End, eſpecially the chiefeſt of all, the Glory of God and of their Redeemer Chriſt Jeſus. Thus I have briefly diſpatch'd theſe two Enquiries, namely, how the Regenerate and Unregenerate differ as to *the Commiſſion of Sin,* and as to *Acts of Religion.*

IT remains that we *try* and *examine* our ſelves by the foregoing Particulars, whether we be of the Number of the Regenerate, of the truly Godly and Sanctified, or whether the Graces we pretend to, be only Semblances of true Holineſs. There is a kind of moral Virtue even in irrational Animals. Generoſity, Gratitude, Faithfulneſs, Love, Compaſſion, and other faint Images of moral Excellencies there are in ſome Brutes. Yea, the diabolick Spirits ſeemingly approach to what is good and virtuous and Praiſe-worthy. They are Maſters of great and profound Knowledge, even in divine Things, and own and acknowledge the *Meſſias,* and that he is *the Son of God,* Mat. viii. 29. and the Author of *Salvation,* Acts. xvi. 17. xix. 15. and that he will come at the laſt Day to *Judgment,* Mat. viii. 29. They not only *believe* but *tremble,* Jam. ii. 19. They ſtand in Fear and Awe of the divine Majeſty. They worſhip him, Mark. v. 6. They *pray* and *beſeech him,* Mat. viii. 31. There is great Reaſon then that we ſhould be very careful in *examining* and *ſearching* ourſelves, both as to our *Sins* and as to our *Graces.* We ſhould be fully ſatisfied that our Spot is *the Spot of God's Children,* Deut. xxxii. 5. And not the Spot and Defilement of the Children of Darkneſs. And it highly concerns us to take an Account of all our Acts of Religion, and of all the Duties we perform, and the Virtues and Graces we exert, that we may be ſure they ſurpaſs the Actions of the Unconverted and Unregenerate. So much for the *ſecond Inference,* on which I have been very large, becauſe I would give them full Satisfaction in ſo important a Matter.

Thirdly, IF upon Examination you do not find that you are regenerated and changed, then endeavour to haſten out of this dangerous State with all the Speed imaginable. Haſten as *Lot* out of *Sodom,* make no Delay, fly for your Life, look not back. And to quicken you, let me beſeech you to conſider ſeriouſly theſe two things, 1. The wretched and woful Condition that you are in. 2. The Neceſſity of the new Birth. Oh, that you would think of this, Firſt, that an unregenerate State is a *miſerable* and *deplorable State,* becauſe it is a State of *Darkneſs,* a State of *Slavery,* yea, and a State of *Death.*

1. The unregenerate State is a State of *Darkneſs*; and thus it is ſtiled in ſundry Places of holy Writ. Yea, 'tis called [*the Power of Darkneſs*] in *Col.* i. 13. Oh how is the poor Soul inveloped with Night and Blackneſs? It is blinded through groſs Ignorance and Unbelief; and being thus blind and beſotted it knows not which Way it goeth, what Path it takes. It runs into all Error and Deluſion, it is obnoxious to all Dangers. Yea, though a Guide be offer'd unto it, yet it wilfully and obſtinately refuſes his Conduct, and will by no

Means be led and directed by him. This muſt needs be a very perilous Condition. The Man who is thus blind, will certainly ſtumble and fall, he muſt needs offend God, and commit all Sin without Remorſe and Regret.

2*ly*, AN unregenerate State is moſt forlorn and miſerable, becauſe 'tis a State of *Slavery* and *Bondage*. This likewiſe is frequently aſſerted in the Scripture of Truth, and it doth in a lively Manner repreſent unto us the ſad and affrighting Condition of a graceleſs Perſon. He is taken *Captive* by Satan at his Pleaſure; he is one in Chains and Fetters, as well as he is in a dark Dungeon (as the former Particular repreſented him to you). He is tied down, and cannot move Hand or Foot, that is, he hath contracted a miſerable Neceſſity of Sinning; hath brought himſelf into ſuch a Condition that he commits Sin with the greateſt Freedom, and yet at the ſame Time is forced to it. He is the Devil's Bond-ſlave, he is now wholy at his Command, he is hurried by him into all Exorbitances. Sin may now properly be ſaid to rule and reign in him, for he ſubmits to its rigid Empire, and truckles under its Iron-Scepter. I will add in the

3*d*. PLACE, that the State of the Unconverted and Unregenerate muſt needs be very wretched, becauſe 'tis a State of *Death*. Where there is not the new Birth and a new Life, there Death muſt needs reign. The unſanctiſy'd and unregenerate Man *abideth in Death*, ſaith St. *John*; whereas thoſe who have had Experience of the ſpiritual Regeneration are *paſſed from Death to Life*, as the ſame inſpired Writer teſtifies, 1 *John* iii. 14. If you are not born again, you are dead Men, dead not only in your Sins, but everlaſting Death and Damnation will be your Lot.

WHICH brings me to the next Particular, *viz.* this, As you muſt conſider what is the *woful State* of *Unregeneracy*, ſo be convinced of the *abſolute Neceſſity* of the *new Birth*. You muſt be born again, otherwiſe you ſhall die eternally. That you may be accepted of God, and that you may be his Friends and Favourites, it is neceſſary, indiſpenſably neceſſary that your Hearts and Lives be changed. There muſt be an Infuſion of new Qualities into your Minds: There muſt be a renewing and healing Grace, whereby the Will is powerfully inclined and determined to all ſpiritual Good. This is the true Principle of Converſion. And before this regenerating Grace is beſtow'd, a Man can't turn unto God: For his Nature is averſe and contrary unto God and to all Goodneſs. 'Till he hath attained to this, he is in the State of Nature, and cannot help and relieve himſelf. He cannot come out of that curſed Condition, he cannot ſo much as ſincerely incline to any thing that is Good, much leſs can he act it, till regenerating Grace be infuſed into his Nature. That which I requeſt of you then is this, that you would be thoroughly convinced of the abſolute Neceſſity of having this new Spirit confered upon you. Know this that you periſh everlaſtingly without this, you are for ever ſhut out from the Kingdom of God, unleſs a new Nature be wrought in you. This then is the *one thing neceſſary*. Buſy your Thoughts about this, whatever elſe you neglect and forget. Let all your Cares and Projects, all your Aims and Deſigns give Way to this. All your other Care and Labour is loſt if you be not ſolicitous about this. For *what is a Man profited if he ſhall gain the whole World and loſe his own Soul?* What are all the Pleaſures, Riches, and Honours of the World to him, if he be not Poſſeſſor of that which can only, on his Part, purchaſe the Favour of God? The Wrath of God abides on every unregenerate Man. If you would eſcape that Wrath and Vengeance, you muſt be born again, you muſt be new Creatures.

AND as I have exhorted you to haſten out of the State of Unregeneracy, ſo now (in the next Place) I earneſtly call upon you to haſten into the other State, the State of Regeneration, the new Birth. By all Means promote and farther it, advance it, and ſet it forward. But you'll ſay, To what purpoſe do I ſpeak to you to undertake ſuch a Task? Why do I bid you be thoroughly convinced of the Neceſſity of Regeneration, and the Danger and Miſery of the contrary? Why do I put you upon advancing and promoting the Work of Regeneration, when as it is to be effected only by God's Grace? Regeneration is not in our Power; it is the free Gift of God; it is the ſole Work of the Spirit. Why then do you call upon us to buſy ourſelves about it? I anſwer, notwithſtanding Regeneration is God's Gift and the Spirit's Work, yet we muſt with Care and Conſtancy apply ourſelves to the Uſe of thoſe Means which God hath appointed for the working of Regeneration in us. And they are ſuch as theſe,

1. ARDENT and inceſſant Prayer at the Throne of Grace. Remember that tho' Prayer doth not purchaſe Grace, yet it is appointed as one Means of procuring it. God will not beſtow Grace for the Virtue or Merit of your Prayers, but you are certain of this that God will accept what he hath commanded; he will not be diſpleaſed at his own Appointment, and ſuch is Prayer and Supplication. He acquaints us that he will be *ſought unto* by us. Therefore be invited thereby to beg Grace with all Earneſtneſs and Importunity. Let me aſk you, Did you ever retire from the World in good Earneſt, and ſeriouſly diſpoſe your Heart to Prayer? Tell me, Did you ever deliberately and ſolemnly put up your Petitions at the Throne of Grace? Did you paſſionately and earneſtly beſeech God to change your Hearts, and to renew your Minds, and to alter your Lives? If you never did this, begin to do it now. Lay aſide your worldly Buſineſs for a Time, ſet apart a Seaſon for this weighty Work: Upon your Knees beg with all Affection and Ardency that God would create a clean Heart and renew a right Spirit within you; that he would vouchſafe for the Merits of Chriſt Jeſus to renew and ſanctify you, to change your Natures and to make you ſuch as he would have you to be.

2*ly*. REMEMBER that ſtrong Pangs and Throws go before the ſpiritual Birth; and therefore on your Part you muſt be careful that you ſtrive and ſtruggle, wreſtle and combat, that you labour and contend (as much as in you lies): You muſt indeavour with all your Might to reſiſt the Temptations of the evil Spirit: You muſt induſtriouſly ſhun all *Occaſions* of Sin and Vanity; you muſt ſtop your Ears to all *Allurements* and *Invitations* to Wickedneſs. Though you cannot turn your own *Hearts*, yet you may ſtrive to turn your *Eyes* away from beholding Vanity, and you may keep out of the *Company* of thoſe that will inviegle you to it. Do what you can, exert the Faculties God hath given you. I appeal to your Conſciences, whether they do not tell you that you may *avoid* more Evil than you do. Are you not conſcious to your ſelves that you have been *idle* and *ſlothful*, and have neglected to improve the *Opportunities* and *Talents* which God intruſted you with, and that you have not made Uſe of the Strength which God gave you? This you cannot deny. You know then what you are to do for the Future; go about it in good Earneſt, and aſſure your ſelves that God will never be wanting to you: Do your Part, and he will certainly do his.

3*ly*. MAKE Uſe of the Miniſtry and Diſpenſation of the Word in order to the new Birth. *I have begotten you again by the Goſpel*, ſaith St. *Paul* to his *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. iv. 15. The Preaching of the Goſpel is the appointed Means of Regeneration. *As new born Babes, deſire the ſincere Milk of the Word that you may grow thereby*, ſaith St. *Peter*, 1 Ep. ii. 2. Now, tis certain that the ſpiritual *Generation* as well as the ſpiritual *Nutrition* and *Growth* are procured by the faithful diſpenſing of the Goſpel. *My little Children*, ſaith St. *Paul* to his *Galatians*, *of whom I travel in Birth till Chriſt be formed in you*, Gal. iv. 19. Miniſters of the Goſpel are ſpiritual Parents, they do as it were travail in Birth, till Chriſt be formed and brought forth in their Peoples Souls. This Regenerating and Forming is by the Word of God in the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, and by the Spirit's accompanying that Word. From both theſe together there is produced a Knowledge of our Condition, an Inſight into our Danger, an Apprehenſion of our Guilt, a Conviction of our Conſciences, a Change of our Hearts, an Amendment of our Lives. That then which you are to do is this, Attend unto the Word, ſubmit your ſelves to the Teachings of the Spirit. Comply with the Motions of the Holy Ghoſt in the reading or hearing of the Word. Reſiſt not the Spirit of Grace; make Uſe of the proper Means which are ordained on purpoſe to beget Grace in you: For the primary Intent of the Goſpel is not the Obduration, but the Converſion and Salvation of Men. The Word is a proper and fit Inſtrument of conveying a new Nature and Life unto thoſe that ſincerely attend upon it. And know this, that though it ſeem to be an ordinary and mean Thing, yet it is of divine Inſtitution, and is appointed by him who hath not promiſed to beſtow Grace upon us in any other Way. Thus I have finiſhed my *3d Inference.*

Fourthly and laſtly, UNTO you who really feel in your Hearts the new and regenerating Principle, unto you that are experimentally acquainted with what I have been treating of, I have this Word of Comfort and Joy to ſuggeſt. You are the happieſt Perſons alive; yea, you are the only happy Perſons. Peace and Joy are your Portion, and yours alone. The regenerate State is a State of unſpeakable Solace, Serenity and Satisfaction; yea 'tis a heavenly and glorious State, for Glory is but Grace advanced and exalted. The Feaſt of the Dedication of the Temple was called *Encænia*, and ſo it is ſtiled by our Saviour, *John* x. 22. The Word properly ſignifying *Renovation.* Regenerate and holy Perſons are ſaid to be the *Temple of the Holy Ghoſt:* They are conſecrated and ſet apart to a new and holy Uſe: They are truly ſaid to keep the evangelical *Encænia*, the *Renovalia* (as *Caſtalio* tranſlates the Greek Word) the *Feaſt of Renovation*, as it properly ſignifies, a *new Dedication* of the Soul, as a Holy Temple unto God. You that are born again have the beſt Ground of Feaſting and Exultation. Let ungodly Men ſay what they pleaſe of you, let them load you with Reproaches and Calumnies, yet you have the inward Teſtimony of your renewed Hearts and Conſciences which is able to comfort and refreſh you. A Phyſiognomiſt once told *Socrates* that he was a lewd and laſcivious Perſon, and that he knew as much by the Lines of his Countenance: But the Philoſopher replyed, 'Tis true that you ſay, that by my natural Temper (which you read in my Face) I am ſuch a Perſon, but I have changed my Nature by Principles of Philoſophy, and therefore I value not your Cenſure of me. A regenerate Man may with *greater Reaſon* defie the Obloquies and Slanders which he meets with: He was by Nature, it may be, ſuch a one as the reviling World repreſents him to be, but he rejoices in this that he is an *other Man*, he is changed by a renewing Principle of Grace.

PERMIT me to add another remarkable Paſſage to this Purpoſe, It is reported that when an Aſtrologer told *Cardinal Pool* his Fortune (as they commonly call it, but not well) and peremptorily inſiſted that it would prove true, he return'd this Anſwer to him, You may, it is likely, conjecture concerning me according to my natural Birth and firſt Nativity, but I muſt tell you I was born again by Baptiſm, and that Day doth eclipſe and deface the other which was before. But certainly, to be born again not only of Water but of the Holy Ghoſt, to be really ſanctified and changed, this is the beſt *Nativity.* The Time when this happens is the beſt * *Birth-day:* And now indeed you have Occaſion to rejoice and be exceeding glad.

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A

A DISCOURSE Concerning the *NATURE* and *NECESSITY* OF GOOD WORKS.

EPHES. ii. 10.

For we are his Workmanſhip created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good Works, which God hath before ordained, that we ſhould walk in them.

HAVING treated of *Sanctification* and of *Regeneration*, I will in the next Place diſcourſe of *Good Works*; for theſe are nearly related unto thoſe, and may indeed be ſaid to be a Part of them; for the Apoſtle here acquaints us that thoſe who are ſanctified and regenerated are *created* or *made for good Works:* Theſe are Part of the *New Creation in them.* Whoſoever is born again was firſt by an eternal Decree predeſtined to good Works; and then in due Time by the effectual Grace of God he becomes his peculiar *Workmanſhip*, and is enabled through Chriſt Jeſus actually to perform theſe Works. This in expreſs Terms our Apoſtle aſſerts, ſaying, *We are his Workmanſhip created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good Works, which God hath before ordained, that we ſhould walk in them.* It is the former Part of the Words which I intend to treat of, and the Propoſition which I will offer from them is this, That thoſe who are God's Workmanſhip are created in Chriſt Jeſus to good Works. Or, in plainer Terms, All thoſe who belong to God, and are created anew by his Spirit are inabled by Virtue of that new Creation to perform good Works. In purſuance of this Propoſition, I will ſhew 1. What good Works are. 2. What are the Qualifications of them. 3. Why they muſt be done. 4. Apply all.

I. THAT we may underſtand what is meant by *good Works*, we muſt know that there are *Habits* of Grace, and there are *Acts* and *Exertments* of Grace; and theſe two are different from one another, becauſe theſe *Acts* flow from thoſe *Habits.* Theſe Acts are two-fold, either inward or outward:

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I. That we may underſtand what is meant by *good Works*, we muſt know that there are *Habits* of Grace, and there are *Acts* and *Exertments* of Grace; and theſe two are different from one another, becauſe theſe *Acts* flow from thoſe *Habits.* Theſe Acts are two-fold, either inward or outward:

The inward are ſuch as theſe, A Fear and Reverence of the Almighty, a Love of God and all Goodneſs, and a Love of our Neighbours (which is call'd *the Work and Labour of Love*, Heb. vi. 10.) Holy Deſires and Longings, Faith (which is alſo call'd the *Work of Faith*, 1 Theſſ. i. 3. 2 Theſſ. i. 11.) Hope, Patience, Meekneſs, Sobriety of Mind, Humility, Contentment, and other the like internal Operations of the Soul: Which, though they be not outwardly acted, yet are properly the *Works of* the Soul; for the not producing them into outward Action hinders not their being *Works*. For the *Mind* of Man may as properly be ſaid to *work*, as the *Body*; yea, if we conſider the true Nature of things, we may rightly aſſert that the Soul is the principal Worker in Man, and that all the outward Exertments of Virtue in the Body flow from the Mind of Man, and take thence their Denomination.

THESE *outward Acts* of Grace, which are exerted by the Members of the Body, and are apparent in the Practices of holy Men, are the *good Works* generally ſpoken of in the Scripture. They are no other then viſible Exertments and actual Diſcoveries of the inward Graces before mention'd. Thus our Reverencing of God is diſcover'd by our ſolemn worſhiping him, and that in the moſt decent and humble Manner. Our Faith in him, and Love to him, are ſhew'd by our Readineſs to do his Will and obey all his Commands. Our Sobriety and Purity of Mind are put into Act by Temperance and Chaſtity of Body; and our inward Love and Compaſſion to our Brethren by relieving their Neceſſities, and doing all kind Offices for them. Theſe latter Works, namely of *Charity*, are by Way of Eminency call'd *good Works* in the Stile of H. Writ. Thus 'tis ſaid, *Dorcas was full of good Works*, Acts ix. 36. Which is there explain'd by *Alms-deeds which ſhe did.* In 2 *Cor.* ix. 8. A *good Work* is an Act of Liberality. So in 1 *Tim.* v. 10. By *good Works* is meant *Bringing up Children*, *Lodging Strangers*, *Waſhing the Saints Feet*, *Relieving the Afflicted.* Accordingly the Apoſtle exhorts thoſe that are rich in this World to be *rich in good Works*, 1 Tim. vi. 18. This is call'd by the ſame Apoſtle *Maintaining good Works*, Tit. iii. 8. As you'll find explain'd, v. 14.

MOREOVER, we diſcover our inward Humility, Meekneſs and Patience, either by keeping Silence, or by framing our Speech as it becomes Perſons who have poſſeſs'd their Souls in Patience. For even *Words* are included in *Actions* and *Works*, and are comprehended under *Doing*, according to that of the Apoſtle, *Col.* iii. 17. *Whatſoever ye do in Word or Deed.*

IN ſhort, all outward Exerciſes of Piety, as Calling on God, Hearing his Word, and ſuch like; with all external Acts of Religion which have a more immediate Reference to ourſelves, as Living ſoberly, temperately, chaſtly; or thoſe which more nearly reſpect our Neighbours, as living juſtly and honeſtly, are meant here by *good Works.* For though the Vulgar underſtand by theſe Terms Works of *Charity* only, thinking that Feeding the Hungry and Cloathing the Naked, Relieving poor Widows and Orphans, Building of Alms-houſes, Founding and Endowing of Hoſpitals deſerve the Name of *good Works*; yet it is certain there are *other good Works* beſides theſe: For this is a large and comprehenſive Term, and includes all the Duties and Employments of Religion, all Performances and Actions whereby we may adorn our chriſtian Profeſſion. It is true, *good Works* in general comprehend *all Works morally good*, whether they be adjuſted to the Law of Nature or the revealed Law: But I ſhall chiefly and principally conſider good Works as they are conformable to the revealed Rule of the Goſpel. And ſo I proceed to the

II. THING I undertook, *viz.* to ſhew what are the *Qualifications* of theſe good Works, that is, what is abſolutely required in theſe Works to make them good. I ſhall ſpeak only of thoſe *Qualifications* which are requiſite in evangelical good Works, namely, ſuch as are neceſſary to eternal Salvation.

1. IN a good Work it is requiſite that the *Perſon* who doth it be *good.* By which I mean not only that he be inwardly good and righteous, according to that of our Saviour, *Make the Tree good, and his Fruit good*, Mat. xii. 33. But I underſtand this alſo, that the Perſon who performs good Works be one that is reconciled to God: For if the *Perſon* be not accepted, the *Work* cannot

not be good. It is ſaid, *the Lord had Reſpect unto Abel and to his Offering*, Gen. iv. 4. Firſt unto *Abel*, and then to his Offering. The Sacrificer muſt be accepted before the Sacrifice: The Perſon muſt be reconciled to God before his Work and Service be valued. The Father of the *Prodigal* firſt embraced and kiſſed his returning Son, and then put the Robe upon him, the Ring on his Hand, and Shoes on his Feet. He firſt receiv'd him into Favour, he pardon'd his Sins, and then adorn'd him with Grace and Holineſs, and look'd upon theſe as good and laudable. It is one Requiſite of a good Work that it proceeds from him who is a Friend of God, and accepted in Chriſt Jeſus. A late Prelate of the Church of *England* ſpeaks thus, *I can do no good Works at all before I be firſt juſtified. My Works cannot be accepted as good till my Perſon be ſo: Nor can my Perſon be accepted by God till firſt engrafted into Chirſt; before which engrafting into the true Vine 'tis impoſſible I ſhould bring forth good Fruit.* Bp. *Beveridge*'s private Thoughts of Religion, *Artic.* 8. This was the Perſuaſion and Profeſſion of that learned Man before his Mind was diverted and tainted by other Views. He, as all other orthodox Divines, held it to be an undeniable Truth, that before any Work pleaſe God, the Worker muſt pleaſe him, *i. e.* he muſt be one in his Favour. [†] Good Works muſt be the Works of a juſtified Perſon. Not that here I ſeparate Juſtification from good Works, or ſay that one is really and in Time before the other: For when 'tis ſaid, God *juſtifies the Ungodly*, Rom. iv. 5. It is meant of thoſe who were before ungodly, but now repent that they were ſuch. But I only aſſert that no *unjuſtified* Perſon can do any thing which is *really good*; and that *good Works* are juſtly ſaid to be *ſuch* as they come from thoſe Perſons who are reputed good and righteous by God, and are accepted: This will ſcarcely paſs for orthodox Doctrine in theſe Days, but he that knows the Tenour of the evangelical Covenant will embrace it as an indiſpenſable Truth.

2. As the Works are good becauſe of the Perſon, ſo both the Perſon and Works are good becauſe of the *Righteouſneſs of Chriſt*, in whom God is well pleaſed. This is that great evangelic Truth which the Apoſtle hath convey'd to us in *Eph.* i. 6. *He hath made us acceptable to the Beloved*; what we do is favourably receiv'd as we are conſider'd in *Chriſt*: By Virtue of our Relation to him, who is our Righteouſneſs, our Performances are accounted righteous. This Qualification of a *good Work* the devout Mr. *Herbert* aſſigns, ſaying, *It is a good Work if it be ſprinkled with the Blood of Chriſt.* God is pleaſed with nothing we can do but for the ſake of his Son, for even our beſt Performances are defiled with Sin, and theſe are in themſelves unacceptable to him; but the Righteouſneſs and Merit of Chriſt Jeſus commend them to God. Our *Works* and our *Perſons*, are ſaid to be good after the ſame Way: As *we* are counted good and righteous before God, ſo *our Works* are reckon'd to be of the ſame Quality for the alone Merits of our Redeemer and Saviour. This is the Reaſon why all Men in the State of Unregeneracy, *i. e.* before they are reconciled to God, cannot perform any Works that are really good, though they ſeem never ſo laudable and worthy: For whilſt their Perſons are not accepted through Chriſt and his Merits, their Works are interpreted to be evil.

3. A *GOOD Work* in the Goſpel-ſenſe and Meaning is a Work done by the *Grace of God* and the *Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit*. This is it which our Church in its 10th Article aſſerts, [We have no Power to do good Works, pleaſant and acceptable to God, without the Grace of God preventing us, that we may have a good Will, and working with us when we have that good Will.] And again, in her 13th Article, [Works done before the Grace of Chriſt and the Inſpiration of his Spirit, are not pleaſant to God: Yea, rather we doubt not but they have the Nature of Sin.] This is that which diſtinguiſheth the Works of the Regenerate from thoſe that are in the State of Nature: The former do all by the Direction and Aſſiſtance of the Spirit, but the latter are wholly Strangers to it. This makes the great Difference between the Works of *Pagans* and thoſe of holy *Chriſtians*. Some of the former, as *Pythagoras*, *Plato*, *Ariſtotle*, *Epictetus*, *Seneca*, and others, ſpoke and did many excellent things, they were very eminent for their moral Virtues and Indowments: But there is Reaſon to think that they were acted only by natural Light, and that they knew nothing of the Spirit. Or, if we may hope that

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[†] Bona opera ſequuntur juſtificatum non præcedunt juſtificandum. Auguſtin. de fide et operibus.

a few of them were enlightned from above in an extraordinary Manner, yet the reſt without doubt were under no higher Conduct than that of natural Reaſon: Which is not ſufficient to inable a Man to do a good Work in the evangelic Senſe: For ſuch a one muſt proceed from the Grace of God, and the Guidance of the Holy Ghoſt. * Without Chriſt, ſaith St. *Jerom*, all Virtue is to be reputed vitious and faulty.

4. IT muſt be done in *Faith*. For the Apoſtle tells us that *without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*, Heb. xi. 6. And conſequently (as he adds in another * Place) *What is not of Faith is Sin.* Therefore you may obſerve that when he reckons up (in *Hebrews* the 11th ch.) the worthy and noble Works of the Fathers of old, he acquaints us that all of them were the Product of *Faith*. By *Faith* they attempted and undertook, and by *Faith* they atchiev'd and accompliſh'd thoſe great and admirable things. No Works whatſoever deſerve the Denomination of *good*, unleſs they proceed from a Heart enlightned and purified by Faith. This was the Doctrine of St. *Auguſtin* of old, * Although (ſaith he) a Man may ſeem to do things that are good, yet becauſe they are void of Faith, they are not to be call'd good. And our Church agrees with him in her 13th Article, [Works done before the Grace of Chriſt and the Inſpiration of his Spirit are not pleaſant to God, foraſmuch as they ſpring not of Faith in Jeſus Chriſt;] and if ſo, they can't properly be ſaid to be *good*. The Homilies of our Church teach the ſame thing: Thus 'tis ſaid in the *Homily* of *Juſtification* that [without Faith all that is done of us is but dead before God, altho' the whole Work ſeem never ſo gay and glorious:] And in this Homily 'tis ſhew'd that this was the Doctrine of the *primitive Fathers*. Whence we may gather that all *Infidels*, whether *Jews*, *Turks*, or *Pagans*, cannot pleaſe God, neither are their Actions in Religion ſuch as he will accept of, which is a Doctrine that is exploded in our Days. But it muſt needs be true becauſe the Actions of ſuch Perſons are devoid of *Faith*.

5. IN all Actions that are really good there muſt be *lawful* and *right Means* uſed. That cannot be a *good Work*, in which we uſe undue Ways and Methods to bring it to paſs. *Lot*'s Daughters ſeem'd to have an honeſt Meaning and good Intention when they ſaid, *Come let us make our Father drink Wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preſerve Seed of our Father*, Gen. xix. 32. That we may keep up our Family, and have a numerous Poſterity. But Drunkenneſs and Inceſt are unlawful in themſelves, and therefore cannot be lawful Means to bring about the beſt Work. Thoſe vile Wretches of whom *Solomon* ſpeaks, who deſigned to murder and ſteal, that they might *fill their Houſes with Spoil*, pretended to be fair and honeſt Dealers. † *Caſt in thy Lot among us*, ſay they, *let us all have one Purſe:* We will be very juſt in dividing the Spoils we get, every one of us ſhall have an equal Part: To prevent diſhoneſt and unjuſt Dealing we will ſhare them by Lot. O the Honeſty of Theives! They will be juſt with that which is none of their own: That they may be falſe to others, they reſolve to be true to themſelves. This is a plain Cheat and Colluſion. Acts of Juſtice and Honeſty muſt be done by Ways that are lawful and good. We muſt not be juſt among our ſelves by being unjuſt to others. I muſt not lie, nor defraud, I muſt not oppreſs and perſecute my Neighbour, much leſs may I kill and murder him, to effect the greateſt Works of Piety or Charity that can be imagined: Chriſt tells his Diſciples that *The Time cometh that whoſoever killeth them will think that he doth God Service*, John xvi. 2. But this is not the right Way of doing God Service. Lying and Perjury, Inquiſitions, Maſſacres, Aſſaſſinations, Murders, and all Immoralities may be committed, ſay the *Papiſts*, ſo it be for the *Catholick Cauſe*, ſo it be for *Holy Church*. Theſe are Ways whereby they pretend to ſerve God, and advance the Intereſt of Religion. But God is not delighted with ſuch Service, becauſe if we do good, we muſt do it by good Means. I muſt not ſteal that I may be charitable to the Poor. I muſt not get an Eſtate unjuſtly, and think to legitimate, and as it were to ſanctify that unlawful Way of getting it by employing and diſpoſing of it to pious Uſes. I muſt not promote the beſt Cauſe either by Perſecution or by Rebellion. Though it be God's Cauſe, it ought not to be fought with the Devil's Weapons. The Apoſtle wipes off that ſlanderous Report which ſome had rais'd

* Sine Chriſto omnis virtus in vitio eſt. In cap. 3. ad Galat.

* *Rom.* xiv. 24.

* Etſi bona videatur facere, tamen quia ſine fide facit, nec bona ſunt vocanda. In Pſal. 31.

† *Prov.* i. 14.

rais'd concerning him, that he ſaid, *Let us do Evil that Good may come*, Rom. iii. 8. As if he thought Evil would become Good by his deſigning it to a right End. But this the Apoſtle would by no Means allow of, and therefore is very careful to take off all ſuch Cavils againſt him. There muſt be (as I ſhall ſhew you afterward) a *good End* propoſed; but there muſt alſo be *good Means*, otherwiſe Men will not know what is a *good Action*; for there is ſcarcely any Action, though never ſo evil, but may be done for ſome good and laudable End. This then we muſt fix upon, that where the Work is good, there the Means are right and juſt.

6. GOOD *Works* muſt be adjuſted to a *right Rule*, they muſt be according to the Will and Commandment of God. It is true, Reaſon is the Voice of God: He planted the Principle in us, and if we do what that bids us, we do in ſome Meaſure obey God. Whence a wiſe *Pagan* ſaid, to obey Reaſon and God, is the ſame. Yea, a chriſtian Father pronounceth concerning right Reaſon that 'tis divine.* But though this in the Mind of Man be the Rule and Meaſure of ſome moral Actions, yet Scripture (but not devoid of Reaſon) is the Standard of all thoſe which are chriſtian and evangelical. *To the Word* therefore *and to the Teſtimony:* If our Actions and Works be not regulated by theſe, they can by no Means be ſaid to be good. They muſt not be after our own Inventions, but according to this divine Command. Let us think we heard that Queſtion put to us, † *Who hath required this at your Hands?* Where is there a Commandment for what you do? Nothing muſt be done in Religion without this. [He hath ſhew'd thee, O Man, what is *good:* And what doth the Lord *require* of thee but to do juſtly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humby with thy God?] *Mic.* vi. 8. That is *good* which *God requires:* And ſuch are Acts of Juſtice, Mercy and Humility, and all the other indiſpenſable Duties of Religion which are enjoined by God. Good Works muſt be preſcribed by the divine Law, by God's Word either expreſly or by Conſequence. Sometimes a general Rule will ſerve to juſtify a ſpecial Work, for all ſpiritual and religious Actions can't be ſet down particularly; but we muſt ſee that they be included in or reduced to thoſe more general ones which are expreſly commanded in the Scriptures. This divine Law is a Declaration of God's Will, an Expreſs of the divine Pleaſure: And Sin is therefore Sin becauſe it is a Tranſgreſſion of this Law, (1 *John* iii. 4.) And conſequently good Works are good becauſe they are according to this Law, which is the Diſcovery of the divine Will. Thence is the Determination of † our Church concerning thoſe *Works which are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done*, that *they have the Nature of Sin.* Thus the Works of *Pagans*, devoid of the Light of the Goſpel, are beſide the right Rule; and ſo are a *Tranſgreſſion* or *Prevarication*, and on that Account cannot be ſaid to be good.

MUCH more all thoſe Works (of what Perſons ſoever) which are repugnant and contrary to the Will and Law of God are undoubtedly evil. That an Action cannot be good if it be againſt the divine Command, we may learn from 1 *Sam.* xv. 21. *&c.* Where we read that when *Saul* was bid to deſtroy the *Amalekites* utterly, and to ſpare nothing, he and the People reſerved the beſt of the Spoil, the choiceſt of the Cattle, to ſacrifice unto the Lord; but this being againſt that poſitive Command of God was found to be a wicked Act, and was rewarded accordingly: For God is never pleas'd with the Sacrifices of Diſobedience. Whatever Act in Religion is of our own Heads, or merely by the Command of others, is unacceptable to God, whoſe Law only is the Rule of our Service and Worſhip. Wherefore God complain'd of the *Jews* that *their Fear to him was taught by the Precept of Men*, Iſai. xxix. 13. And a long Time after this our Saviour complain'd of the *Phariſees* for the ſame Reaſon, *viz.* becauſe *they tranſgreſſed the Commandment of God by their Tradition*, Mat. xv. 3. They did many things in a religious Way which were grounded on no Precept of God. Therefore it is ſaid that *they worſhip'd him in vain, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*, v. 9. The Church of *Rome* writes after this Copy: Theſe modern *Scribes* and *Phariſees* place the main of their Religion in * *Will-worſhip*, and ſuch a Service as God never enjoin'd, as namely in needleſs Faſts, Superſtitions, Feſtivals, Pilgrimages, monaſtick Severities, worſhiping of Saints, Vows of ſingle Life, and of Poverty, and many ſuch groundleſs Practices and fond Traditions, whereby they *make the Commandment of God of none effect.* The ſame may be ſaid of all the Exploits of thoſe who are led by a falſe and erroneous Spirit, and follow the Dictates of their corrupt and deluded Imaginations, notwithſtanding their Pretences to divine Inſpiration, and extraordinary, yea immediate Illapſes of the Spirit. What is not according to the Rule of God's Word is not to be admitted and allowed of. *Good Works* are only ſuch as God hath commanded, and are warranted by the holy Scripture. The contrary is *Licentiouſneſs.*

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* Λόγῳ πείθεσθαι ϗ Θεῷ ταὐτόν.

* Θεῖος λόγος. Juſt. Mart. Apol. I.

† *Iſai.* i. 2.

† Artic. 13.

* 2 Col. 23.

7. EVERY good Work muſt proceed from a *right Principle.* And by a right Principle I mean theſe following things,

Firſt, THAT our Works proceed from *ſufficient Knowledge.* As it is in Vice; unleſs it be done with Knowledge, it is no Vice. An Idiot or a Lunatick, being not *compos Mentis*, is no Criminal according to Law, he can't commit Felony or Treaſon; for whatever is a Crime muſt be done with the Underſtanding: The Perſon that doth it muſt be one that knows what he doth. So it is with Virtue; it muſt be accompanied with the Underſtanding, elſe 'tis no Virtue. No Action done ignorantly is good. He that acts without Knowledge cannot be ſaid to act morally, much leſs chriſtianly. We muſt firſt know that what we do is our real Duty, and we muſt alſo underſtand why it is ſo. Religion muſt not be blind, Reaſon muſt always go firſt, and carry the Light before all our Actions: For the Heart and Life cannot be good if the Head be not enlightned. Indeed Religion would be no other then a miſ-ſhapen and confuſed *Chaos*, unleſs the *Light* of Knowledge were there; for there would be nothing to direct and guide Mens Actions, whereupon would unavoidably follow Diſorder and Confuſion. And how is it poſſible that any thing ſhould be effected with Safety and Succeſs? How can Men go on right in the Dark? How can they move and act orderly without Sight? How can they diſcern Truth without Light? How can Religion go forward without ſome Principle to conduct it? And *Knowledge* muſt neceſſarily be ſaid to be that Principle.

IT was the ſaying of *Rabbi Hillel*, a famous Maſter among the *Jews*, † No man that is ignorant can be good. Goodneſs cannot be ſeparated from Knowledge. He that is good muſt know why he is ſo. The Underſtanding is the Baſis of all Religion. Piety and Knowledge muſt go Hand in Hand. In ſhort, chriſtian Virtues are either mental or moral, intellectual or practical. A Man cannot be really good unleſs he be furniſhed with both theſe. Now the great Virtues of the Mind are Knowledge and Prudence. See that ye be Poſſeſſors of theſe, that ye may be Maſters alſo of the others. Perſuade your ſelves that you cannot be truly religious if you be ignorant. What the wiſe *Roman* Orator ſaid in a lower Caſe, I muſt apply in this, * If you take away Knowledge and Principles, you take away likewiſe all Practice, you deſtroy all Action in Man's Life: You baffle the whole Courſe of Religion and living well.

WE may take Notice of the Apoſtle's Method and Order in *Rom.* xiv. 14. *I know and am perſuaded* (ſaith he) *that there is nothing unclean of itſelf.* His Knowledge made Way for his Perſuaſion; whereas many are *perſuaded* before they *know.* They take up their Religion on Truſt, they acquaint not themſelves throughly with its Principles, they deſire not to lay their Foundation well; and then it is no Wonder that they miſcarry in their Practices. The accompliſhed Chriſtian is call'd by *Clemens Alexandrinus* † Γνωστικὸς a *knowing Perſon.* This Father *Gnoſtick* is a *compleat Saint.* Which gives us to underſtand that it was the Apprehenſion of that excellent Father, that Knowledge is a main Requiſite of a Chriſtian, and doth as it were give him his Denomination. None can deny that the Way to the Practice of Godlineſs is to be well informed concerning God and his Will. But on the contrary, a great Part of Irreligion and Prophaneneſs, of practical Impiety and Wickedneſs, is founded on Ignorance, and a being unacquainted with the Truths of Religion.

THE Apoſtle tells us that the *Jews had a Zeal of God*, but *'twas not according to Knowledge*, Rom. x. 2. and therefore was blameable. On the ſame Account the Religion and Worſhip of the *Papiſts* are to be exploded, when they defend, as well as practiſe, *Praying in an unknown Tongue.* Many of their Worſhipers

† Nullus indoctus eſt vir pius. Cap. Patr. c. 2.

atâ cognitione et ſcientiâ tollitur omnis ratio et vitæ degendæ et rerum gerendarum, Cic. de finib. lib. 1.

† Stromata.

ſhipers know nothing of the Senſe and Meaning of what they ſay, and yet they think themſelves very devout. Beſides, they are taught that *Attention* is not neceſſary all the Time of prayer: They need not mind what they are doing when they are worſhiping. So there be a good *Intention*, it ſufficeth, ſay moſt of their * great Doctors, eſpecially † ſome of them are very expreſs and poſitive in this Matter. They hold that ſuppoſing there was an Intention and Purpoſe at firſt, it is not required that the Heart and Mind be concern'd in the Worſhip afterwards: The Mind need not ſtill be ingaged in God's Service. Their Thoughts may be employ'd about other things when they are worſhiping. If they pronounce the Words it is enough, though they had not the Senſe. Though the Thoughts wander, yet if the Lips move, it will ſerve. Yea, at *Maſs*, their moſt ſolemn Act of Religion, it is uſual with them to talk, look about, and employ their Heads on ſome other thing. Theſe Practices are defended and juſtified by them, becauſe God, they ſay, may be worſhiped when he is not minded, nor what they do think of. This is the Devotion and Service of a great Part of the Church of *Rome*, a blind ignorant Devotion, and ſuch as is unworthy of rational Creatures. For the *Underſtanding* ought to be the Principle of all our religious Duties: They muſt be diſcharg'd with *Knowledge*, the Fountain of all Religion being Light and Knowledge, and a reaſonable Senſe of our Duty. The Underſtanding muſt make Way for the *Will*. Which brings me to the next Particular.

Secondly, GOOD Works muſt proceed from a *free* and *voluntary Principle*. As he that acts ignorantly, ſo he that acts unwillingly cannot be ſaid to act well. Nothing is more evident than this, that *Volition* and *Choice*, *Freedom* and *Deliberation* are required in all Acts whether evil or good, and on that Account they are blameable or unblameable. Thus though we are angry at another for ſome Hurt he hath done, yet we ceaſe that Anger when we know he did it not willingly. This Excuſe works on all Men, and calls for Pardon: But if the thing be done willingly, then we are ſtill angry and diſpleas'd; for the Perſon who did it is deſervedly to be blamed. Thus Diſeaſes or Defects in the Body, if they come by Nature and Providence, are not upbraided and blamed, but if they come by Vice and our own Fault, then they are wont to be objected to us, and we are aſhamed of them ourſelves. This ſhews that the *Voluntarineſs* of Actions makes them vitious and blameable. Hence the Reaſon why Beaſts are not Sinners, and ſo puniſhable on that Account, is becauſe they have no Reaſon and Choice. A Beaſt that kills a Man ſins not, offends not, becauſe he acteth not with a rational Choice. For though in the *Moſaick Law* thoſe Beaſts ſuffer'd Death who were acceſſory to the Death of a Man, or who were made uſe of by Men in beaſtial Actions; and though it was an *Athenian Law* (as * *Demoſthenes* teſtifies) that even inanimate things, as Wood or Stone, which were inſtrumental in killing a Man, ſhould be baniſh'd as guilty of Murder; yet none of theſe were properly Puniſhments and real Inflictions of Penalty on them, becauſe the Animals and things themſelves were not capable of acting vitiouſly, they being wholly devoid of a rational Freedom, and Power of chooſing.

AND ſo in the Actions of *Men*, which are not attended with Willingneſs and Deliberation, there is no Goodneſs or Sinfulneſs at all. Whatever Action in Religion any Man is compell'd to, cannot properly be ſaid to be good or evil. † Virtue, ſaith an excellent Writer, is free and voluntary, but what is forc'd and violently extorted cannot be Virtue. For where there is Compulſion there is no Liberty, no Will. Thus it may happen that exceſſive Fear and Amazement may hinder an Act from being ſinful, becauſe there is in ſuch a Caſe no Election, no Freedom, and conſequently no Sin. Choice is neceſſary to denominate an Action good or ſinful; and every Act is ſo far good or ſinful as it is voluntary. To the Will is to be imputed whatſoever is ill or well done by us. There is nothing good or bad but what is Matter of Choice and Conſultation. As Vice muſt be with the Will, or elſe 'tis no Vice, ſo it is alſo with Virtue; there muſt be Liberty to chooſe, otherwiſe it is no virtuous Action; for Virtue is not a thing forced, and againſt the Will, but it is free

and

*Vaſquez, Cajetan, Aquinas, Suarez, &c

† Sylveſter, Durandus, Paladanus.

* Oratio contra Ariſtocratem.

† Ἀδέσποτόν τι χρῆμα ἡ ἀρετὴ καὶ ἑκούσιον. τὸ δὲ καταναγκασμένον καὶ βεβιασμένον ἀρετὴ εἶναι οὐ δύναται. Greg. Nyſs. de Opif. Hom cap. 16.

and voluntary. * This is neceſſarily required to make a Work *good*, this is an indiſpenſible Ingredient of all virtuous and religious Actions. Yea (as I ſaid before concerning the want of *Knowledge*) without this Principle they have nothing of *Morality* in them, and conſequently have no *Goodneſs* in them. For, as *Arrianus* rightly determines, * The Eſſence of good is rational Choice. Where Religion and Goodneſs take Place in Mens Hearts, there the Backwardneſs, Averſeneſs and Obſtinacy of the Will are removed, they become a *willing People*, they ſerve God with a frank Mind, and a moſt ready Propenſion. This I ſay is neceſſary to give their Actions the Denomination of *good Works*.

Thirdly, WITH the Underſtanding and Will muſt be join'd the *Affections*. And this includes in it theſe following things,

1. *INTEGRITY of Heart*. As Servants are bid to dicharge their Duty *in Singleneſs of Heart*, Col. iii. 22. So all Perſons ought to perform the whole Duty which is required of them with the ſame Qualification; they muſt *do the Will of God from the Heart*, they muſt obey their great Lord with Sincerity and Uprightneſs, and cordial Affection. When they ſuccour and retrieve their diſtreſſed Brethren, they muſt do it with an hearty Compaſſion and Commiſeration: Elſe their moſt liberal Succours are of no Value. Which may be the Apoſtle's Meaning when he ſaith, † *Though I beſtow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and though* in doing this I meet with unkind Returns, and am injured and perſecuted, and my very Life be ſought after; though *I give my Body to be burn'd, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing*; that is, if there be not a truly noble and generous Spirit from whence theſe my Almsdeeds do flow, if there be not a hearty Principle of brotherly Love in me, which makes me do this and all thoſe other things which belong to true Charity (which are ſet down in the Verſes following in that Chapter,) all that I do is inſignificant and to no Purpoſe. In like Manner, when Men diſcourſe religiouſly, when they pray to God, or hear his Word, or are employ'd in any other pious Exerciſe, it muſt be with an affectionate Senſe of what they do; otherwiſe it will *profit them nothing*. That Complaint againſt the *Jewiſh* People will reach them, *viz. That they draw near to God with their Mouth, and with their Lips do honour him, but they remove their Hearts far from him*, Iſai. xxix. 13.

2*ly*. MORE particularly an entire *Love of God* is required in every good Work. All our Actions muſt flow from this Principle; for if we love not God, we cannot do the Works of God. We muſt firſt bear a hearty Love to him before we can pour out our Supplications before him, before we can offer up our Thanks and Praiſes to him in an acceptable Manner. So when we ſhew our Love to our Brethren by relieving their Wants, it muſt be the Product of our ſincere Love to God, or otherwiſe it will not be reckon'd by him as a good Act. St. *Paul* tells us that the converted *Hebrews ſhew'd their Love towards God's Name in that they miniſtred to the Saints*, Heb. vi. 10. And it was that *Love* which made their *miniſtring* acceptable. Chriſt at the laſt Day will reckon all thoſe Acts of Kindneſs which were *done* by the Righteous *to one of the leaſt of his Brethren*, as *done unto himſelf*, Mat. xxv. 40. The Ground of which is this, that all thoſe Acts of Kindneſs, as feeding the Hungry, and doing thoſe other Offices of Love there mentioned, proceeded from their hearty Love to Chriſt. This rendred that Service pleaſing to God, and this is that holy Fire with which all our ſpiritual Sacrifices and Performances muſt continually be offer'd.

3. There muſt be an entire *Love*, not only of *God*, but of Goodneſs itſelf, and the intrinſick Excellency and Perfection that is in it. There muſt be a Delight and Pleaſure in the Ways of God, and in all thoſe good and virtuous Actions which we do, and that for their own Sakes. He that is really good loves Virtue for itſelf, that is, he loves it when Sin and Virtue, when worldly Pleaſure and Virtue, when worldly Profit and that ſtand in Competition. He loves it better than all things elſe, and before all: He loves it ſo, that if all temporal Rewards and Ends were taken away, yet he would adhere to it. He loves it when it is diſcountenanced and derided, when it is hated and perſecuted: And therefore he practiſes it when all the World oppoſeth him, and

* he

* Quid tibi opus eſt ut ſis bonus? Velle. Senec. Epiſt. 80.

* ȣ̓σία τȣ̃ ἀγαθȣ̃, εὐλόγιςος ἐκλογή. Diſſertat. 1. cap. 2.

† 1 *Cor.* xiii. 3.

* he counts the doing of his Duty a ſufficient Recompenſe. This is to love Virtue, Goodneſs and Holineſs for their own Sake; this is to love them becauſe of their innate Beauty and Pulcritude, this is to love them becauſe they are lovely. And with this Love of God and Goodneſs is always join'd a Hatred of Sin. The religious Works of a truly good Man proceed from a Deteſtation of the intrinſick Evil and Vitioſity, the inbred Pravity and Turpitude which are in Sin, from a loathing of Vice as it is oppoſite to God, and his Image, as it is an Obliquity contrary to the divine Nature and Perfections. This makes him refrain from the Commiſſion of Sin, and this puſhes him on to enterprize all holy and godly Actions.

But here I muſt inſert this (that I may not be miſtaken) that I do not wholy exclude *Self-love* and *a Reſpect to the Recompenſe of Reward*, when I maintain the Neceſſity of this Principle of loving God and Goodneſs for themſelves. It is true, there is an *unlawful Self-love*, and it is condemned by the Apoſtle, who reckons *Lovers of themſelves* among the worſt Sort of Men. Theſe are they that have a Kindneſs only for their Luſts, and indulge themſelves in their carnal and ſenſual Deſires, and prefer their worldly Intereſt before all other Concerns, even thoſe of their immortal Souls. When ever they chance to act in Religion, it is meerly from a ſelfiſh Principle, from ſome Proſpect they have of bodily and ſecular Advantage. But there is alſo a *lawful Self-love* implanted in our Natures, and God hath made this the Pattern whereby we are to love our Neighbours. He bids us love them as ourſelves. Unleſs we mind ourſelves and our own good, we ſhall not be kind to them long. This Self-love, which is the Meaſure of our Love to our Brethren, is that reaſonable love which we ought to have, which in right we ſhould bear to ourſelves. It is a warantable Principle placed in us by God for our Welfare, and whereby we are ſtirr'd up to provide for our Preſervation. This is the prime and fundamental Law of Nature. It is the firſt and chief Appetition, ſay the *Stoicks*, in every Man, † to preſerve himſelf, for none is ſo near to us as ourſelves.

If a late learned Writer had lay'd this Ground-Work, and improved it without his corrupt Gloſſes and Inferences, none could have blamed him for it, but rather he had deſerved Praiſe for advancing ſo uſeful a Principle of moral Philoſophy and Religion. The *right Self-love* is conſiſtent with the Love of Virtue and Goodneſs, yea, it is a Degree of it. This lawful and honeſt Love of ourſelves proceeds from the Knowledge of the Excellency of our Make, I mean the Frame of the Soul for Virtue, and its Capability of Glory and Happineſs. The Property of this (as of all Love) is to wiſh the Good of the thing loved, and procure its Safety and Felicity. This virtuous Self-love is a Friendſhip which a Man hath toward himſelf, and whereby he conſults his own Welfare, which can only be attain'd by the Practice of Holineſs. No vitious and wicked Man can have this Love in him, becauſe he is an Enemy to the Practice of all Holineſs, and conſequently doth all he can to bring himſelf into Danger and Miſery, and to make himſelf for ever unhappy. By this it appears that we may love *ourſelves* and *Goodneſs* together. Nay, theſe are ſo far from being inconſiſtent Principles, that they cannot be ſeparated from one another. As this Self-love is connatural to all Perſons, ſo it is impoſſible to act in Religion without it. We muſt do all for God's Glory: But then 'tis certain that the Glory of God is contain'd in our own Good. Hence likewiſe it appears that as good and virtuous Actions are to be done for their own Sake, ſo not wholly without a Reſpect to a Reward.

The contrary Doctrine, as it firſt came from the *Stoicks*, ſo it hath been taken up ſince by ſome myſtical Men in the Church of *Rome*: And ſome other Sects of Enthuſiaſts (as the Family of Love, and others that were not of the *Roman* Church) have embrac'd this Error, namely, that we ought to ſerve God without any Conſideration of Advantage to ourſelves, and that the having Regard to a Reward is utterly inconſiſtent with true Piety. But this is a Stoical Bravado, and hath not gain'd the Approbation of ſober and conſiderate Men. And there is no Reaſon it ſhould, ſince God frequently calls Men to repent and forſake their Sins, and to obey his Commandments, that they may avoid his Judgments and partake of his Mercy. *If ye be willing and obedient, ye ſhall*

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* Rectè facti, feciſſe merces eſt. Senec.

† τηρεῖν ἑαυτόν. Diog. Laert.

eat the Good of the Land; but if ye refuſe and rebel, ye ſhall be devour'd with the Sword, Iſai. i. 19, 20. *Repent and turn yourſelves from all your Tranſgreſſions: So iniquity ſhall not be your ruin*, Ezek. xviii. 30. Hence it is manifeſt that our outward Peace and Welfare in this World may lawfully be *one Principle* of our Actions. Let us not doubt then, but that our future Peace and Happineſs in another Life may be a lawful Motive and Incentive to Holineſs.

THE Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* will confirm us in this, who acquaints us that the perſecuted Chriſtians *took joyfully the Spoiling of their Goods* (which was an high Act of Religion) *knowing in themſelves, that they had in Heaven a better and an enduring Subſtance.* Whereupon he bids them *not caſt away their Confidence which had great Recompenſe of Reward*, Heb. x. 35. He tells us afterwards that *Abraham*, the Father of the faithful, *looked for a City that had Foundations*, Heb. ix. 10. And doth not the holy Writer prove that the Hope of Reward muſt be joyned with our Acts of Religion when he poſitively aſſerts, that *He that cometh to God muſt believe* not only *that he is*, but that *he is a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him*, Heb. xi. 6. 'Tis impoſſible to come to God unleſs we are perſuaded that our Coming will be profitable to us, that we ſhall receive Benefit by it. We expect Happineſs in God, and from him, but for ourſelves. And the Reaſon why the Devils and damned Spirits love not God is, becauſe they can't expect any Good and Advantage from him.

BUT if you could ſuppoſe that there are no Rewards or Puniſhments annexed to Godlineſs and its contrary, then I will aſſert that a good Man would do his Duty meerly becauſe it is his Duty, and becauſe it is excellent in it ſelf: And he would not ſin, though there were no Calamity attending it, though it were followed with no Puniſhment either here or hereafter: He would not ſin, becauſe it is contrary to God's Nature, becauſe it grieves the Holy Spirit, becauſe it is in itſelf a thing to be abhorred. Upon *Suppoſition* this, I ſay, is to be aſſerted, and this is that which all intelligent Men mean, when they hold that God is to be ſerved without an Eye to the Reward, and without the Conſideration of Puniſhment. But ſeeing the State of things is *otherwiſe*, ſeeing God hath expreſly promis'd not only temporal but eternal Rewards to thoſe that live godlily, and hath threatned bodily Evils in this Life, and endleſs Torments in the other to thoſe who live wickedly; and ſeeing theſe things are the greateſt Realities that are, it follows that we may love God for his Promiſes and Rewards, and fear him for his Threatnings and his Puniſhments; and yet at the ſame time that we may and ought to love a holy Life *for itſelf*, and to hate a wicked one for *its own* intrinſick Vileneſs. The Caſe then in ſhort is this, when I ſay *good Works* are to be done out of a ſincere *Love of Goodneſs itſelf*, I do not mean that we are to ſerve God without Regard to any Recompence, but this, that we are *primarily* to ſerve him out of a Love to himſelf and Goodneſs, yet we may *ſecondarily* do it out of a Conſideration of the good things which he hath pleas'd to promiſe us. Both theſe are conſiſtent, but the firſt ought to be the *chief Principle* of our Actions, but the other muſt be *ſubordinate* to that.

4. NOT only *a Love of God*, but a *Fear of him* muſt be a Principle from whence all our holy Actions are to proceed, a Fear of acting contrary to the Purity of God's Nature, a Fear of diſpleaſing and offending him. *Joſeph* acted out of this excellent Principle, when he cried out, *How ſhall I do this Wickedneſs and Sin againſt God?* How dare I offend the Majeſty of Heaven who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity? How can I ſin againſt him who made me, and who upholds me in my Being, and daily confers innumerable Mercies and Favours upon me? Thus the Apoſtle, ſetting down the Duty of Servants, tells them they muſt obey their Maſters in *Singleneſs of Heart fearing God*, Col. iii. 22. Whilſt they ſtand in Awe of their Maſters according to the Fleſh (as he calls them there) they muſt have a greater Fear and Dread of their ſpiritual Maſter, they muſt not dare to diſobey his Commands who enjoins nothing but what is highly reaſonable and eaſy to be performed. So St. *Peter* lets the Chriſtian Wives know that their *chaſt Converſation muſt be coupled with Fear*, 1 Pet. iii 2. they muſt live in a conſtant Awe of God, who ſeeth the Behaviour, and abhors all unchaſt Thoughts, and lewd Actions. Again, there is a Fear of that Puniſhment which always goes along with evil Actions, the Wrath of God and his ſevere Judgments which he ſends upon wilful Sinners. *Fear him who is able to deſtroy both Soul and Body in Hell*,

ſaith our Saviour. God is to be *fear'd* becauſe he can *deſtroy* us. Therefore this Fear is not wholly to be excluded from being one Principle of good Actions, ſuppoſing it degenerates not into a more ſervile and ſlaviſh Fear. But the Fear which we ought *chiefly* to be actuated by, is that which I mention'd before, a Child-like Fear, whereby we tremble at the Thoughts of diſpleaſing God our heavenly Father, and whereby we are excited to pleaſe him in all things.

5. *Humility* is another Principle from whence we muſt act. Every good and righteous Man lays his Foundation low, he begins his Works with a Submiſſive and Self-denying Spirit, he proceeds with Lowlineſs of Mind, and a mean Opinion of himſelf, and of all he can do: And when he hath *done all thoſe things which are commanded him, he ſaith, I am an unprofitable Servant, I have done that which is my Duty to do,* and therefore I deſire nothing. Contrary to this is that Spirit of the *Roman Church.* That they may have a clear Claim to Heaven, they brag they purchaſe it with their good Works: For all their good Works are meritorious, but eſpecially ſome of them, which they ſay are above the Standard of the Bible; for they not only do what is commanded them, and what is their Duty, but they do more than this, which they call *Supererogating.* Now, when theſe Men act thus from a haughty Conceit of themſelves, and of what they are able to do, when all their Works proceed from a proud Opinion of meriting by them, 'tis impoſſible they ſhould be *good,* and acceptable in the Sight of God. This taints and corrupts the beſt Actions they can do.

Laſtly, *Alacrity, Joy, and Chearfulneſs,* and ſo likewiſe a *due Warmth, Zeal and Ardency* are other Principles from whence our good Works ſhould ſpring. We muſt with Gladneſs undertake and perform them, and we muſt *ſerve the Lord* with a *Fervency of Spirit,* Rom. 12. 11. Where we may gather that thoſe Perſons, who in their daily Service repeat the Creed and run over the Ten Commandments in a formal Manner, and ſay their Prayers by rote, and hear Sermons with Unconcernedneſs, and do all other Duties in a cold and ſuperficial way, are ſo far from doing that which is good and Praiſe-worthy, that they mock God and provoke him to ſhew his Vengeance againſt them; for God will be ſerv'd in Spirit and in Truth, with the Heart and Affections as well as with the outward Man. And thus you ſee what are the *Principles* of virtuous and godly Actions.

I MIGHT here mention the *other Principles* which Men generally act by in Religion, and by reaſon of which it comes to paſs, that the Works which proceed from them are not good and holy, chriſtian and evangelical. Many are befriended with a *good natural Complexion of Body:* Their Tempers incline them to Sobriety, Chaſtity, Gravity, Charity, and other the like commendable Qualities. Theſe Men are not beholding to their Minds but their Bodies. The Inclinations and Actions are not the Product of a reſolved Mind and free Choice, but of their bodily Conſtitution. It is their natural Temper that guides them. Thoſe goodly Things that you ſee in them are not true and real Exertments of Virtue and Holineſs: They are only complexional Graces, temperamental Virtues. Another uſual Principle is *Shame*: This ſo checks and bridles them that they refrain from many vitious Enterprizes, and refuſe to act thoſe things which are againſt publick Honeſty. Others make the *Laws of the Magiſtrate* and the *Authority of their Superiors* the chief Spring of their Religion. The higher Powers has commanded them to do ſuch things, and therefore they do them, eſpecially when there is a Penalty annex'd, when they muſt be puniſh'd for not doing them. This hath made thouſands come to Church, and pray, and hear, and receive the Sacrament. This hath made others abſtain from notorious Drunkenneſs, Swearing, and Perjury, and other groſs Sins. All the Goodneſs they have is from Fear of the Penalty which the Magiſtrate is to inflict upon Offenders. *Example* and *Cuſtom* are Principles to other Men: They obſerve what others do, they ſee many Perſons, and thoſe accounted Virtuous and Godly, do ſuch things, and therefore they reſolve to do ſo too. Some eſpecially love to imitate their *Anceſtors,* they are mightily pleas'd with what *they* did. This is the chief Principle that ſets many *Papiſts* on Work: They imbrace ſuch a Way becauſe it was the Practice (as they are told) of their *Forefathers.* The Religion of a great Part of them is grounded wholly on Example and Preſcription. Theſe are the *falſe* and *miſtaken Principles* of many in the World. Not but theſe may be uſeful ſometimes, and ſerve to check Vice, and to promote Goodneſs among Men: But this is rather by Chance than by any certain Virtue and Efficacy in them. If theſe Principles be in Subordination to the other, they may be made Uſe of; but alone and in themſelves conſidered, they are but mean and triffling, weak and incompetent, vulgar and childiſh, beſides that they are changeable and arbitrary, and ſo cannot be *ſtanding* and *ſolid Principles* of Action.

BUT *ſuch* are thoſe which I before named, are ſtrong and manly, ſubſtantial and unalterable: They are the proper Cauſes and Sources of religious and good Works, and what ever Actions are not the Reſult of theſe cannot be ſaid to be religious or good. *Theſe* are the things which are chiefly to be conſider'd by us, and not the bare Action or Work itſelf, which is purely phyſical, as it is abſtracted from theſe. *Jehu deſtroy'd Baal out of Iſrael, and executed that which was right in God's Eyes*, Kings ii. 10. 30. One would think that he was a very *good Man*, and that this Work was very good; but yet it is immediately added, *He took no heed to walk in the Law of God with all his Heart: He departed not from the Sins of Jeroboam*, v. 31. His Actions were phyſically and materially good, but there was an inward Principle wanting; he acted not out of Love to God and Goodneſs, he had no Hatred of Sin even when he puniſh'd it, he pull'd down Idols, but ſet up Iniquity in his Heart. It was admirably ſaid of an ancient Philoſopher, * All things are Trifles as long as a Man errs from the true Principle. Though he err'd from it himſelf, yet he was ſenſible of this grand Truth, that nothing is availing without a *right Principle*. And it is Chriſtianity alone which gives us the full Diſcovery of it, and calls upon us to mind it as the chiefeſt thing. This bids us ask ourſelves, What it is that leads us to act? What it is that ſets us on work? Whence are the Springs of all our Motion? What is the ſource of our Activity? What Foundation and Bottom hath it? For a good Work muſt be well founded; becauſe the Principle of the Action is one main thing that conſtitutes the *Goodneſs* of it.

8. THIS is another indiſpenſible Qualification of a *good Work*, that it be done *for a good End*. As there are *Fountains or Principles of Actions*, ſo there are *Ends* or *Deſigns* belonging to them all. Theſe two have been generally confounded by moſt Writers, whereas there is a great *Difference* between them. You muſt neceſſarily diſtinguiſh between *Principles* and *Ends* if you would ſpeak properly and ſignificantly. *Fountains* and *Springs* of Actions are thoſe from whence the Actions flow: *Ends* and *Aims* are thoſe to which the Actions tend. There is a vaſt Difference between theſe. I have told you what the former are: Now I will ſet before you the latter. The *right Ends* which ought to be in all evangelical Actions (for of ſuch I intended chiefly to ſpeak) are theſe three, our *own Salvation*, the *good of others*, and in perſuance of both *God's Glory*.

Firſt, WE muſt aim at our *own Salvation* and *Happineſs* in all the Actions and Exerciſes of Religion: In whatever Duty we are ingaged, we muſt look to this, we muſt ſeriouſly urge it on ourſelves that we have Souls to be ſaved: And this muſt influence upon us in all that we do, ſpeak, or think. God hath made Man capable of Happineſs, ſhall not we look after this our ſelves? Can any End be more neceſſarily and peculiarly ours? Is not this our proper and particular Concern? Are we not to aim at this with our moſt ſerious Intention? Yes certainly, this great End ſhould direct and ſteer us in all our Actions, this which the Apoſtle calls *the End of our Faith, even the Salvation of our Souls*, Pet i. 1. 9. In reſpect of *Ourſelves* this is our main End.

Secondly, THE *Salvation* and *Happineſs of our Brethren*, is another excellent End which we ought to attend to. We muſt conſider that we are Members of the ſame myſtical Body the Church, and by Virtue of that we are to have a mutual Affection to one another, we ought to be concern'd for others as well as for ourſelves; we muſt endeavour to promote the Welfare of our Brethren: Our Actions muſt have Regard to *them*: We muſt be careful that we do nothing whereby they may be offended, whereby they may be diſcourag'd or hinder'd from ſerving God, and doing their Duty: But on the contrary, it ought to be our Care and Study that our Brethren be edified by what we do, that our Words and Behaviour be ſuch as are ſerviceable to build them up in their moſt holy Faith, to forward them in the Way of Godlineſs here, and to advance their eternal Happineſs hereafter. What a noble, generous and brave Deſign is this, to make all our religious Actions ſome way uſeful to the good of the World, to do what we can for the real Advantage of our Fellow-Creatures? What an excellent

* Λῆρος οὖν πάντα ἕως τις τῆς ἀρχῆς ἀπέσφαλται. Porphyr. de Abſtin.

cellent and worthy End is it to inſtruct Mankind, to reſcue them from the Love of Vanity and Vice, to do all that lies in us to make others virtuous and happy? In a Word, to ſave both their Bodies and Souls? The *Papiſt* pretends that his Vows, and Faſts and Penances, and ſuch like ſuperſtitious Works are for the Good of others; he merits for *them*, he ſaith, as well as for *himſelf*, he hopes to help ſome of his Friends out of their Durance in Purgatory by his repeated Prayers and Maſſes. Though *this* be a fond and groundleſs Miſtake, yet it is *certain* that a good Man really helps his Brethren by his Works of Religion; and this is one thing which he intends in the performance of them: His Deſign is to do others Good by all his holy Undertakings, in ſome manner to promote their ſpiritual Welfare, one way or other to contribute towards their Salvation and Happineſs.

Thirdly, GOOD Works muſt be done *to God's Glory*. The chief and principal End of Man, is to aim at the Honour and Glory of his Maker: For though ſome of his Actions relate properly to Himſelf, and his own Good, as Acts of Sobriety, Contentment, Moderation, and the like; and other Actions refer to the Good and Safety of others, as Mercy and Charity, and all Acts of Juſtice, Honeſty, and upright Dealing; and a third Sort of Actions are ſaid to tend immediately to God, as the Duties of Devotion and Piety; yet notwithſtanding this particular Tendency of Man's Actions, it is moſt true that All of them of what kind ſoever are to be directed to the Glory of God. They all center here, for this End, as it is the laſt and moſt eminent, ſo it includes the other. * *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatſoever you do, do all to all to the Glory of God*, ſaith the Apoſtle; acquainting us that we muſt deſign God's Glory in all our Actions, and Enterprizes, whether natural, civil, or religious, eſpecially theſe laſt are to be directed to this grand End; † *That God in all Things may be glorified*, as another Apoſtle ſpeaks.

* 1 Cor. x. 31.

† 1 Pet. iv. 11.

TO glorifie God is an uſual Phraſe in the Old and New Teſtament: But *how* can we glorifie God? Can a poor Creature add any Thing to the Glory of his Maker? The plain Meaning of it is comprehended in theſe two Things. 1. *To glorifie God*, is to declare and make known his Glory by confeſſing and acknowledging it, by extolling and celebrating, by praiſing and magnifying the excellent Nature, Attributes and Works of God, by ſetting forth and diſplaying his wonderful Majeſty, and making it appear to the World. That this is to glorify God, you may gather from *John* xvii. 4. compared with *v. 6. I have glorified thee on Earth*, ſaith Chriſt; which is explain'd by thoſe Words, *I have manifeſted thy Name unto the Men, which thou gaveſt me out of the World.* 2. God is *glorified* not only with our Mouths, but with our Lives, by acting as well as ſpeaking. Our Works redound to his Glory becauſe they ſet forth his Honour and Praiſe in the World: And by them others are excited to extol the Name of the moſt High. To *this End* therefore we ought to do the Works of Piety, Righteouſneſs and Charity; we muſt remember to fix this as our *chief Deſign*, to exalt and advance God's Honour, to make his Fame and Renown more eminent in the World. Whilſt we make it our Buſineſs to ſave our own and others Souls, we muſt at the ſame time ſtrive to exalt the divine Majeſty, and endeavour by their and our Happineſs to promote his Glory.

WHICH, by the Way, confutes that Miſtake which || one of our Divines perſues, that *the Glory of God is not a different End from Heaven or Happineſs, but is the very ſame:* Whereas it is plain, that there is a formal Difference between them, for the one is the ſetting forth of God's Excellencies, but the other is our perſonal Good, or the Perfection of our Natures. Yea, the Glory of God is ſet forth by the puniſhing of the Wicked in *Hell*, and therefore ſurely it can't be fit to ſay, that 'tis the ſame with *Heaven*. It is true, our *Good* and *Happineſs* concur with the *Glory of God*, and conduce to it; but on that very Account you can't eſtabliſh an Identity between them: Yea rather, when we ſay that God is *glorified* by our *Happineſs*, we own that there is a Difference between them. To aſſert the contrary, is derogatory to God's infinite Majeſty and Excellency; we make Him and ourſelves equal, and we make *ourſelves* our ultimate End, inſtead of making God ſo. And truly this Writer unhappily ſaith as much, for he ſticks not to ſay, *God requires us to glorifie him for no other Purpoſe, but that thereby we may glorify ourſelves*. They are very harſh Words, beſides, that they

|| Dr. *Scot's Chriſtian Life*, P. 1. Ch. 1.

confound the *Means* and the *End*, which muſt not be ſuffer'd. Heaven or Happineſs is a *Means* of glorifying God, but glorifying is the End. Yea, he expreſsly acknowledges, that *by obtaining Heaven we ſhall glorifie God*, and conſequently he diſtinguiſhes one from the other; yet in the ſame Place he aſſerts, that *it is all but one and the ſame Thing*.

THUS I have aſſigned the *true Ends*, which we ought to have always in our Eyes. But alas, the greateſt Part of Mankind follow *other Ends* and Deſigns in all that they do. They intend nothing but their own Intereſt and ſecular Gain and Advantage, or they hunt after Applauſe, and Credit, and Repute among Men: They wou'd be accounted virtuous, that they may be reverenc'd and honour'd; they wou'd have a Name to be religious, tho' they care not at all for the Thing. Thus *Jehu*, whilſt he deſtroy'd *Baal*, ſought his own Glory: Whilſt he ſeem'd to act for God, he ſought himſelf; and thereby corrupted all his goodly Enterprizes. *Iſrael brought forth Fruit unto himſelf*, and therefore is call'd *an empty Vine*, Hoſ. x. 1. Whilſt he ſought himſelf, and aim'd at his own Intereſt, all he did was in vain. This was it which ſpoil'd and blaſted the moſt ſolemn and religious Duties of the *Phariſees*. *When they did their Alms, they ſounded a Trumpet before them, that they might have Glory of Men*, Mat. vi. 2. *When they pray'd, they did it ſtanding in the Corners of the Streets, that they might be ſeen of Men*, v. 5. *Likewiſe when they faſted, they diſfigured their Faces, that they might appear unto Men to faſt*, v. 16. *Yea, All their Works they did to be ſeen of Men*, Mat. xxiii. 5. All was to gain Eſteem and Reputation, all was for Applauſe and Vain-glory. This wrong End and Intention made all they did ſinful.

IT is to be fear'd, that this *Phariſaical* Oſtentation prevails too much among the High-flown Bigots of the *Romiſh Church*. It may be no Breach of Charity to think, that their Whippings and Scourgings of themſelves, their tedious Penances, their Vows of Virginity and Poverty, their extraordinary acts of Severity and Mortification, and other the like Practices (beſides that they are done to *Merit*) are intended to gain them Reverence and Veneration among Men, and that they may be thought to be Perſons of an unuſual Sanctity, of a wonderful Strictneſs in Religion. And ſo it is with other Sorts of Men, even ſome of thoſe who ſeem to be exceeding averſe to *Popery*: What high Acts of Piety are done by them only to be ſeen of Men, and to be prais'd and applauded? They are very forward and active in Religion, and ſeem to intend the promoting of that only, but in the mean Time they have ſome other dormant Deſign, they aim at an Eſtate, they reach at Honour and Grandeur; they will not ſerve God gratis: They are carrying on their own ſiniſter Contrivances and Purpoſes, when they pretend to aim at heavenly Ends. In brief, they are employ'd in the moſt religious Actions merely out of Self-Intereſt, and not to honour God, but to advance themſelves.

THESE are the undue and wrong Ends, which many Men propound to themſelves in their moſt religious Actions. But theſe muſt all be laid aſide, and we muſt take up thoſe *other* before-mentioned, and proſecute them with all Sincerity. The Deſigns which we ought to have in all our religious Works, are the promoting of our own and others Salvation, and the Glory of the great God: Eſpecially, the laſt of theſe is to be our chief and prevailing End in all we do. *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Firſt and the Laſt*, ſaith the Lord of Life and Glory, *Rev.* i. 8, 11. As he made all, and ſo is the *Beginning*, the Author and Cauſe of all; ſo he is the *End*, the Aim and Scope of all, to which all our Actions muſt continually tend and be directed.

BUT now to *qualify* and *rightly ſtate* this important Subject which I have been treating of, I will adjoin theſe two Things; *Firſt*, I do not mean here, that it is abſolutely neceſſary a Man ſhould *every Time* he acts, think of theſe Ends, it is not requiſite he ſhould formally and actually, in *every particular* and *individual Work* which he doth, intend theſe Things: But this is neceſſary, that he ſo effectually fix them upon his Heart, and ſo conſtantly bear them in his Mind, that he be moved by them to act, and that the Virtue and Influence of them be perceived in all that he doth. When there is not an *actual* Intention, there muſt be an *habitual* One. Or, when there is not a *particular* Deſigning of thoſe Things, there muſt not be wanting a *general* one always in every Action.

AGAIN, *Secondly*, When I ſay all our Works are to be done for the *Ends* above-named, I do not by this wholly exclude *all other Ends.* As two of the great Ends of our Actions, namely, our own Happineſs, and that of others, are ſubordinate to the third, God's Glory; ſo there are other leſſer and inferior Ends which are ſubordinate to all theſe. It is not to be queſtioned, that there may be a *Concurrence* of *Ends*, as well as of *Principles*. It is not unlawful, yea, it is our Duty to deſign in ſome Actions our temporal Gain and Profit, it is commendable to proſecute our worldly Ends. In doing the ſame Thing, two Sorts of Ends or Intentions may be lawfully mixed, namely, thoſe that are divine and ſpiritual, and thoſe that are ſecular and civil. This is lawful even in Religion; a Man may live juſtly and honeſtly in the World for his Peace ſake, he may live ſoberly for his Health's ſake, or he may be moderate and frugal to ſave exceſſive Charges, if he knows they will be harmful to him. Theſe temporal Ends are not unlawful.

BUT then this Rule muſt be obſerv'd, that we ought to look upon the temporal and ſecular Ends as the *leſſer*, *ſecondary*, and *inferior*, and to make them really ſo: But as to thoſe Ends which are *religious*, *ſpiritual* and *divine*, we muſt eſteem them as the *greater*, the *primary*, and *chief*, and we muſt make them *ſuch* always in our Lives. The leſſer Ends muſt ever give way to the greater, the ſecondary muſt be ſubordinate to the firſt and principal, the inferior muſt truckle to the higher. Though a Man may live ſoberly, righteouſly and godlily for the ſake of his Health or Peace, or Repute, or ſome other worldly Advantage, which he knows will accrue to him by living ſo; yet he looks upon theſe as little and mean in Reſpect of the other, and he makes theſe inferior Ends ſubſervient to the greater Ones.

HE evidences this by ſuch Ways as theſe: *Firſt*, He never lets theſe temporal Things ſtand in Competition with, much leſs in Oppoſition to thoſe which are greater and higher: He never ſo [*] *ſeeks his own, as not to ſeek the Things which are Jeſus Chriſt's?* He doth not one with the Neglect of the other. Again, his temporal Safety, Credit, Profit, or any other worldly Ends are but by the by, whereas the Things which are ſpiritual and heavenly, are the main and chief Scope of his Life. Theſe are never collateral with him, but principal. Beſides, this is certain, that he would live a ſober, righteous and godly Life, although there were none of theſe Advantages: He would do his Duty, though there were no temporal Rewards. By all which he gives ſufficient Evidence, what that is which he makes his greateſt, chiefeſt and ultimate End. The Sum of all is, that there is a double End of Man's Life and Actions, and one is conſiſtent with the other. There is a temporal and a ſpiritual End, the one as he hath a Body, the other as he hath a Soul. As he hath the former, he may lawfully intereſt himſelf in the Things of the World, and mind his temporal Concerns; but as he hath the latter, he ought to be earneſt in proſecuting his ſpiritual Ends. This is our Make and Condition: We are mixt, and ſo are our Deſigns; but thoſe that relate to God and Heaven muſt always be predominant. It is impoſſible that both of them ſhould be ſimply and abſolutely our ultimate Ends: Therefore one muſt be ſubordinate to the other. The temporal Ends muſt be refer'd to the ſpiritual ones, and muſt ſubmit to them. We muſt be faithful in acting according to the Ends ſet before us, *i. e.* according to the Nature and Quality of them. We muſt not perſue the temporal and the ſpiritual, the leſſer and the greater Ends alike: We muſt follow the former but moderately and indifferently in Compariſon of the latter. Theſe, as being the more worthy ones, muſt be our utmoſt Ends, eſpecially God's Glory muſt be aim'd at in all our Doings as the moſt prevailing of all.

THIS that I been diſcourſing of is call'd by Divines *Sincerity* or *Purity of Intention*; and no chriſtian Work is or can be good and acceptable without this. For though it is to be granted that the doing a thing to a good End doth not neceſſarily conſtitute the thing good, as I have ſuggeſted before that evil Actions are done ſometimes for good Ends; yet to have good and right Intentions is one inſeparable Qualification of a *good Action*. Unleſs there be a good End intended, it is impoſſible it ſhould be a good Act. I find in the [*] *Miſhnah* that the *Jewiſh Sacrifices* were to be kill'd and offer'd with a *right Intention*, and that an *evil one* made a Sacrifice unlawful. This is undoubtedly true

of

[*] Phil. ii. 21.

[†] *Zebachim*, c. 2, 3.

of the *ſpiritual Sacrifices* under the Goſpel: They muſt be offer'd with good and ſincere Intentions: All things in Chriſtianity muſt be acted for right Ends, and with upright Deſires. This is a neceſſary Ingredient of all *good Works.*

9thly and *laſtly*, TO comprehend all, A *good Work* is that which is done *in a right Manner.* Good Actions are ſuch as have good Circumſtances and Qualities, and evil Actions are ſuch as have undue and evil ones. This then I lay down that all Actions conſider'd in their *phyſical* Capacity are indifferent, *i. e.* they are neither good nor bad. The bare Action is not accompanied with Morality, abſtractly conſider'd it is not good or evil. It is the *phyſical* Act only that is indifferent, but the *moral* Conſideration of it is unalterable, and as long as it hath ſuch and ſuch moral Circumſtances, it is really good or evil. This then muſt be ſaid, that thoſe humane Actions, which are fixed and determined by good Qualities are lawful, and thoſe which have other contrary Qualities are unlawful and ſinful. A good Action cannot become evil, or an evil One good, for as long as it hath ſuch determinate Circumſtances, it cannot but be good or evil. I take *Circumſtances* here in a large Senſe, and I mean by them not only the ſeveral Particulars mention'd in the foregoing Heads, but all Accidents of moral or religious Actions, which are obſerv'd to accompany them, and cling to them, and ſo affect them, that they contribute to their good or evil Nature. I comprehend *Perſons* and *Objects* under this general Title, for according to the Variety and Difference of *theſe*, Actions are either good or evil. The ſame Action may be innocent and lawful for *me* to do, which is not ſo to *another*, and ſo *vice verſâ*. The ſame Thing is lawful to a Man as a *publick* Perſon, which is not ſo, when he is but a *private* One: Thus it is in *Revenge* and *killing a Man.* So likewiſe it is plain, that Actions take their good or evil Quality from the *Object:* As to inſtance, *Anger* and the reſt of the *Paſſions* are neither good or evil in themſelves, but become ſuch (not only from the Cauſe whence they ariſe, but) according to the Object about which they are converſant, and toward which they always tend. Thus it is lawful or unlawful *to be angry*, *to love*, *to hate*, *to grieve*, *to rejoice*, *to fear*, according to the Circumſtance of the Object. *Be angry, and ſin not*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Eph.* iv. 26. but there is an *Anger* that is *ſinful:* And ſo we may pronounce concerning the other Paſſions. And in many Examples of another Nature it might be ſhew'd, that that Maxim of the Schoolmen is true, *All Acts are ſpecified from their Objects.* That Act is morally good or bad, which hath Reſpect and Tendency to *ſuch* and *ſuch* Objects: If it be directed to a right Object, it is good; if to a wrong One, it is of the contrary Nature.

MOREOVER, it is evident that *Time* and *Place* (which are other Circumſtances) conſtitute ſome Actions good or bad. Hence there is that vaſt Difference between the ſame Actions, which were done under the Law, and under the Goſpel. What was lawful then, is not ſo under the chriſtian Inſtitution: And what was lawful in *Judea*, the Place to which the *Moſaick* Law and Rites were confined, is unlawful now, not only in that Land, but in all the Regions of the World. And many *other Circumſtances* there are, as the *State* and *Capacity of Perſons*, *the Relation* and *Condition of Things*, from whence moral and religious Actions take the Denomination of good and evil. All theſe muſt concur to make an Action ſuch: And the Action is not truly moral or religious, till it be thus determined. For this is that which I ſuggeſted in the Beginning, that *good Works* are ſuch as are good in reſpect of the *Manner* of them. General and uncircumſtantiated Actions, as ſuch, have not the Notion of lawful or unlawful; and as for the natural or phyſical Act, it hath been alſo obſerv'd already that it hath no Goodneſs or Evil in itſelf. Wherefore if you would ſee the real and true Nature of any moral or religious Action, you muſt view it in the *proper Circumſtances* of it. You muſt examine whether theſe be good or evil, lawful or unlawful. In an evil and ſinful Action, there is a great Difference between the *Act* and the *Pravity of the Act.* The Formality of many Sins conſiſts not in the ſimple and bare Act itſelf, as in Murder, Adultery, Stealing, *&c.* Therefore you muſt diſtinguiſh between the Act, and the Vitioſity of it: And this Vitioſity is not to be diſcover'd but by certain *Circumſtances*, from which the ſpecifick Nature of humane Actions is taken. Theſe terminate the Act, and make it either virtuous or vitious, morally good or bad; particularly, that is a virtuous,

tuous, good and holy Action which is attended with all the due Circumſtances that belong to it, which is done in a good, right and holy Manner, even ſuch as Chriſtianity requireth. This is a *good Work* in the evangelical Acception.

III. HAVING inſtructed you in the Nature of *good Works*, I am to ſhew you, in the next Place how *reaſonable* a Thing it is that we ſhould take care to do theſe good Works. I will preſent you with thoſe *Arguments* and *Motives* which I apprehend are moſt powerful to incite you to this.

Firſt, I MIGHT mention the *Reaſon* in the Text, where firſt we are ſaid to be *created unto good Works, that we might walk in them.* This is the very Deſign of the ſpiritual Creation or new Birth, that we ſhould exert all theſe acts of Piety and Religion which I have before mention'd. It is the Purpoſe of Heaven in regenerating us that we ſhould walk in the Ways of Holineſs, and conſcientiouſly perform all the Parts of our Duty towards God, towards Men, and towards our ſelves. Again, it is ſaid, we are ſaid to be created *in Chriſt Jeſus* to this. This is the End of Chriſt's Undertakings; *He gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar People zealous of good Works*, Tit. ii. 14. Moreover, it is added that *God hath before ordained theſe Works.* This was the good Will and Pleaſure of the bleſſed Trinity in their eternal Conſults before Man was made. Why then ſhould we, as much as in *us* lieth, fruſtrate the Purpoſe and Decree of *Heaven* concerning us? Or, the Word here uſed may be taken in another Senſe, to which you will ſee the Margin of your Bibles directing you. God hath *before prepared* theſe Works, *viz.* by preventing us with his Grace, by continually affording us his divine Aſſiſtance, by effectually calling us by his Spirit, and by working theſe good Works in us. He that hath departed from Iniquity, and purg'd himſelf from the corruptions of the World, is ſaid to be *a Veſſel of Honour prepared unto every good Work*, 2 Tim. ii. 21. And ſome explain this place by that in *Rom.* ix. 23. where the Apoſtle ſaith, *God afore prepared the Veſſels of Mercy unto Glory*; which is meant of God's calling the *Gentiles* to believe in Chriſt, and to embrace the Goſpel, as the next Verſe will inform you. But that Place ſpeaks of the *Workers*, not of the *Works*, and therefore I cannot look upon it as an Explication of this Part of my Text, eſpecially when I am perſuaded that this Clauſe is not yet rightly rendred either in the Text or in the Margin: For according to the * Original it is not [*which*] but [*by which*] *God hath before ordained*, or *prepared*, namely, us. The plain Meaning of which I conceive is, that God out of his infinite and inexhauſtible Love hath from eternal Ages ordain'd and decreed to prepare all his Elect by good Works, to fit them by theſe for his Service, to inable them by the performing of theſe to walk as becometh the choſen of the Lord. Or, it is likely our Apoſtle, by the full Extent of theſe Words, lets us know that good Works are our Preparative for Heaven and Happineſs; we are fitted by theſe for the eternal Manſions above, for Glory is but Grace exalted, and brought to Perfection. But of this I ſhall diſtinctly ſpeak afterwards.

FURTHER, This (as the Apoſtle ſaith of *Sanctification*) *is the Will of God* 1 Theſ. iv. 3. The divine Command hath made this our Duty; we ſhew our Obedience to the Injunctions of Heaven by doing good Works.

THIS is that which the Apoſtle prays for in behalf of the *Coloſſians*, viz. that they might *walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing, being fruitful in every good Work*, Col. i. 10. What is Matter of our *Prayers* is moſt certainly of our *Practice*, and therefore this is another Obligation upon us.

THIS is that which is commended to us by the Example of the Saints; they have all been zealous Practiſers of good Works. As we are deſirous then to imitate theſe holy Men, and to reſemble ſuch excellent Perſons, let us apply ourſelves to this.

THIS is the grand Evidence of the Truth of our inward Graces. If Faith and other Endowments of the Spirit be planted in us, they will ſpring forth, and ſhew themſelves by theſe Fruits. Hence it is rightly ſaid by our Church, § *Good Works do ſpring out neceſſarily of a true and lively Faith, in ſo much that by them a lively Faith may as evidently be known as a Tree diſcern'd by the Fruit.* And again ſhe ſaith, † *The true and lively Faith in Chriſt bringeth forth good Works, and a Life according to God's Commandments.* Shew then that you have Faith, which is the Root of all Graces, by a holy Life and Converſation. Produce theſe Tokens and Signs of inward Virtue and Goodneſs, that thereby you may evidence both to yourſelves and others that you are true Chriſtians.

THIS

* οἷς προητοίμασεν

§ *Article* 12.

† *Hom. of Salvat. 3d. part.*

THIS is that whereby you ſhew your Thankfulneſs to God for your Election and Redemption. What can you render to the Lord but this for theſe and all the other Benefits which he hath conferr'd upon you? Wherein elſe can you ſhew yourſelves grateful to him for his multiplied Favours? If you have then any Senſe of Gratitude, diſcover it in this particular Inſtance. *Shew forth the Praiſes of him who hath called you out of Darkneſs into his marvelous Light*, by doing all Works of Religion and Holineſs.

YOU might conſider likewiſe that your Labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord: What you do ſhall be favourably and graciouſly receiv'd by him. *If thou doeſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted?* ſaid God even to *Cain*. What the Apoſtle ſaith of Works of Charity, is as true of all good Works: They are *an Odour of a ſweet Smell, a Sacrifice acceptable, well-pleaſing to God*, Phil. iv. 18. Accordingly our Church ſaith, * *Albeit good Works, which are the Fruits of Faith, and follow after Juſtification, cannot put away our Sins, and endure the Severity of God's Judgment, yet are they pleaſing and acceptable to God in Chriſt.* What greater Incouragement can you have to work the Works of God, to diſcharge your Duty with all Faithfulneſs and Diligence, and to perſevere in well doing?

* Art. 12.

I ADD, This is that which is the great Ornament and Luſtre of our chriſtian Profeſſion: This will ſet forth and commend our Religion to the World. St. *Paul* would have chriſtian Women *adorn themſelves, as becometh thoſe who profeſs Godlineſs, with Good Works*, 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10. And in another Place exhorting to good Works, and particularly urging the Duty of Servants, he gives this Reaſon, *that they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things*, Tit. ii. 10. As much as to ſay, this is beautiful and lovely, this is the Grace and Bravery of Chriſtianity. This is ſaid by the ſame inſpired Writer to be a *walking worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are called*, Eph. iv. 1. And thus (as he ſaith) *Our converſation will be as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt*, Phil. i. 27.

BUT there are theſe two Arguments yet behind, which I will more amply inſiſt upon, *Good Works are neceſſary to Salvation: Good Works glorify God.* Firſt, I ſay, they are neceſſary in order to the attaining of Salvation. It is true, our Salvation is gracious, not from Works but free Grace: We cannot purchaſe Salvation by all that we do. Yet notwithſtanding this, good and holy Actions are neceſſary Antecedents of Salvation, yea they are the *Means*, *Conditions*, and *Qualifications* of it. Though our Salvation muſt be aſcribed to divine Grace and the Merits of Chriſt, yet good Works are *Means* appointed in order to our being ſaved. Some are unwilling to aſſert that good Works are *Cauſes* (for ſuch are *Means*) of attaining to Salvation: But let them hear what the learned and pious *Ames* ſaith (who without queſtion would not extol good Works too high) * [*Though our Obedience* (ſaith he) *be not the principal and meritorious Cauſe of Life eternal, yet it is a Cauſe, in ſome reſpect, adminiſtring, helping and advancing towards the Poſſeſſion of eternal Life.*] Thus He. Though we are far from thinking it to be a *principal Cauſe*, yet it is an *inſtrumental One*, and it is appointed by God to be the *Means* of Life and Happineſs. Our good Works do not ſave us, as being in the leaſt meritorious: But they may be ſaid to ſave us as they are neceſſary Conditions of Salvation.

* Medul. Theol. *l.* 2. *c.* 1. Theſ. 30.

ONE would think no ſober and intelligent Man ſhould quarrel with this way of Expreſſion, ſeeing 'tis agreed on all Hands that there is a *Covenant* between God and Man. Now, a *Condition* is neceſſarily included in a *Covenant*, and there is no Covenant but there are certain Conditions in it on both Parts. This is of the very Nature of a *Covenant*, and conſequently good Works are properly *Conditions*, becauſe they are requir'd as Part of the new Covenant, and are neceſſary in order to the obtaining the Privileges of that Covenant, namely Salvation and Happineſs. That I may not be miſtaken, but that this Doctrine may be underſtood aright, I will offer theſe following Particulars,

1. THO' our good Works are Conditions of *Salvation*, yet they are not Conditions as to God's *Election*; for he decreed from Eternity out of his free Will and Mercy to ſave loſt Man, without any Conſideration of their good Works. Predeſtination to Life and Glory is the Reſult of free Grace, and therefore the proviſion of Works muſt be excluded. The Decree runs not thus, I chooſe thee to Life and Bleſſedneſs on Suppoſal or Condition of thy believing and repenting; but thus, I freely chooſe thee unto eternal Life, and that thou may'ſt attain to it, I decree that thou ſhalt believe and repent.

2. Tho' Faith and Obedience be Conditions of Happineſs, yet the Performance of them is by the ſpecial Help and Aſſiſtance of a divine and ſupernatural Power. God who decrees Perſons to good Works, enables them to exert them: And accordingly he decrees to give to his Elect, a Will and Power to perform thoſe Conditions. But as the *Socinians* and *Remonſtrants* ſpeak of theſe *Conditions*, I can't allow of them, that is, if they were performed by us by a Power of our own, or at leaſt without a ſupernatural Power working thoſe things in us. Nor

3dly, Are they *Conditions* in this Senſe that they ſucceed in the Place of perfect Obedience to the Law which the Covenant of Works requir'd. I am convinc'd that no ſuch *Conditions* as theſe are conſiſtent with the new Covenant the Covenant of Grace. But take with you the foregoing Reſtrictions and then you may ſafely hold that good Works are *Conditions:* And the whole Tenour of the Scripture leads us to aſſert as much. Which makes it very reaſonable to condemn the bold Tenet of a modern Aſſertor of the *Antinomian* Principle, namely, that *Man hath no tie upon him to perform any thing whatſoever on his Part, as a Condition that muſt be obſerv'd on his Part, and there is not one Bond or Obligation upon Man to the fulfilling of the Covenant, or partaking of the Benefits of it.*] [*] Or, if this way of ſpeaking, that is, calling good Works *Conditions of Salvation*, be diſliked by ſome that are ſcrupulous, we may ſafely and without Exception ſay with Mr. Perkins, [†] *Works, if they be conſider'd as a Way leading to eternal Life, are indeed neceſſary to Salvation*: They are neceſſary by way of Qualification: For no unclean thing ſhall enter into Heaven. Graces and good Works fit us for that Place and State, they diſpoſe us for Glory. We are not capable of Happineſs without Holineſs. It may be ſome will not approve of ſaying, we are ſaved *by* good Works, but this they muſt needs acknowledge, that we cannot be ſaved *without them:* Yea, we cannot be ſaved but *with them.* Some are converted and ſaved at the laſt Hour, at their going out of the World; but even then good Works are not wanting, for hearty Confeſſion of Sin, and an entire Hatred of it, ſincere and earneſt Prayers, Hope and Truſt in God, Deſire of Grace, unfeigned Love, and zealous Purpoſes and Reſolves, all theſe are good Works, and none can be ſaved without them.

That theſe are abſolutely requiſite in order to eternal Happineſs, in thoſe who are capable of them, is clear from this that the Promiſe of Happineſs is made to ſuch only who do theſe Works. *Bleſſed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and enter in by the Gates into the City* of the *New Jeruſalem*, Rev. xxii. 14. But evil Workers are excluded thence, *Without are Dogs, and Sorcerers, and Whoremongers, and Murderers, and Idolaters*, as you read in the next Verſe. The like had been ſaid before, chap. xxi. 27. *There ſhall in no wiſe enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatſoever worketh abomination.*

And as the Promiſe of Bliſs and Glory is made to none but thoſe whoſe Lives are pure and ſpotleſs, ſo you will find the Proceedings of Doomſday to be according to this, *Mat.* xvi. 27. *The Son of Man ſhall come in the Glory of his Father, with his Angels, and then he ſhall reward every Man according to his Works.* Of thoſe that *die in the Lord* it is pronounced that *their Works do follow them*, Rev. xiv. 13. and they ſhall certainly meet them at the laſt Day. Then not only the *Book of Life* but *the Book of Works ſhall be opened*, and *the dead ſhall be judged out of thoſe things which are written in thoſe Books*, i. e. *according to their Works*, as it is immediately explain'd, *Rev.* 20. 12. And you know how the final Sentence runs, *They that have done good ſhall go into Life everlaſting, and they that have done evil into eternal Puniſhment.* From all which it is plain that the everlaſting Reward of Glory cannot be obtain'd without Obedience and holy Life. Whence you may be convinc'd of the *Reaſon* why good Works are to be done. If there be no *other* but this, it is ſufficient, *viz.* that there is no Salvation and Happineſs without theſe. Wherefore if you would be aſſured of your future Welfare, if you would be confirmed in the Belief of the Certainty of your Salvation, you muſt needs live holy and righteous Lives. This will be a Token and Pledge, a Manifeſtation and Evidence not only to yourſelves, but to others that you are Heirs of Life and Glory.

In the next Place good Works are for God's Glory, therefore they muſt be done by us. As I have ſhew'd before that 'tis a neceſſary Qualification of good

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[*] Dr. *Criſp.*

[†] *Chriſt the true Gain.*

Works that they be done out of an Intention to glorify God, ſo now it will appear that this is one great *Reaſon* why we are obliged to perform them, *viz.* becauſe thereby God is glorified. *Let your Light ſo ſhine before Men*, ſaith our Saviour, *that others ſeeing your Works may glorify your Father which is in Heaven*, Mat. v. 16. The Light of our Works came from God, and it muſt be reflected to him again. All the Lines and Rays of it muſt return to God as to their Center. *Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much Fruit*, John xv. 8. By an eminent and exemplary Life, and fruitful of good Works, God is glorified. To this purpoſe you may obſerve the Connexion of thoſe Words in John xv. *I have glorified thee on Earth, I have finiſh'd the Work which thou gaveſt me to do.* We glorify God on Earth, we bring Honour to his Name here by doing thoſe Works which he enjoyns us. You ſee then how you are concern'd in this Affair; if you are deſirous to conſult the Glory of God in the World, there is a Neceſſity of your doing good Works, and that both becauſe of *wicked Men*, and of thoſe that are *Good* and *Holy*.

Firſt, BECAUSE of the *Wicked*, that you may ſtop their Mouths, and take away all Occaſion of ſpeaking Evil againſt you. St. *Peter* adviſeth the converted Chriſtians who lived among the *Gentiles* to *have their Converſation honeſt among them, that whereas they ſpoke againſt them, as evil doers, they might by their good Works which they ſhall behold, glorify God in the Day of Viſitation*, 1 Pet. ii. 12. Vitious and ungodly Men generally take no Notice of Virtue and Goodneſs any further, than as they ſee it contradicted by the evil Lives of thoſe that profeſs Religion. They obſerve their Carriage, that they may have Occaſion thence to cavil againſt them, and not only to reproach *them*, but *Religion itſelf*. St. *Paul* reminds the converted *Romans*, whoſe Lives were not anſwerable to their Profeſſion, that *the Name of God was* blaſphem'd among the *Gentiles* thro' them, *Rom.* ii. 24. The ſame Apoſtle exhorts the chriſtian Servants to yield all Submiſſion and Obedience to their Maſters, *that the Name of God and his Doctrine be not blaſphemed*, 1 Tim. vi. 1. God's Glory is impaired, his Name blaſphemed, and Chriſtianity itſelf reviled by prophane Men when they ſee Chriſtians walk diſorderly, and take no Care of their Converſations. But a holy, ſtrict and blameleſs Life, in thoſe that profeſs Chriſtianity, is oftentimes effectual to ſilence and baffle the moſt inſolent Gain-ſayers, it cauſes them to reverence the Servants of God, and to entertain a high Opinion of them and their Ways. Nay, this may proceed further, they may by this means be drawn off from Vice, they may be reclaim'd and converted, which will be a very great Advancement of God's Honour and Glory.

AGAIN, For the Sake of *good Men*, we are obliged to be very careful how we walk, we are concern'd to do all the Good we can, that they may not be ſcandalized and hurt by our evil Examples; and conſequently that God's Name may not be diſhonour'd thereby. By our holy and exemplary Lives, we may be ſerviceable to ſtir up the Hearts of the godly to praiſe God on our behalf. *They glorified God in me*, ſaith the Apoſtle of thoſe Chriſtian *Jews* who took notice of his miraculous Converſion, and of his extraordinary Zeal in preaching the Faith, *Gal.* i. 24. By our godly Practice we give the Saints Occaſion to celebrate God's Name, and to glorify him for us. Nay, which is more, we incourage and confirm them in the Ways of God, and in the Practice of their Duty. St. *Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, who were forward and zealous in miniſtring to the Saints, that *their Zeal had provoked very many*, 2 Cor. ix. 2. So is it in all other Acts of Religion; by a zealous exerting of them we ſtir up our Brethren to a holy Emulation, we excite them to follow our Example, and even to outdo us. Hereby Godlineſs is ſpread and advanced, the Salvation of our Brethren is promoted, thoſe that are converted are grounded and eſtabliſhed in the Faith by this means, God is honour'd, and his Son Chriſt Jeſus exalted. Thus nothing doth more redound to the Glory of God than a ſtrict and holy Life. Let us then be *filled with the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt unto the Glory and Praiſe of God*, Phil. i. 11. Yea, *becauſe* they are unto his Glory and Praiſe. Since whatever Man is, he is all from God; ſince whatever he hath, was received from him, it is fit that it ſhould all return to him; which is then done, when all our Actions, Works, and Duty tend to and are terminated in his Praiſe and Honour, when we count it our greateſt Happineſs that we can by our poor Services honour and glorify our Maker. Theſe are the *Reaſons* and *Motives*.

IV. By way of *Inference*, from what hath been ſaid of good Works we may correct the Error of the *Antinomians*, we may confute the Falſhood of the *Roman Church*, we may make a Diſcovery of *other falſe Apprehenſions* of Men concerning good Works; we are hence alſo obliged to examine, whether our Works be good: And laſtly, if we find them to be ſuch, we muſt continue in the Practice of them.

1. What I have deliver'd on this Subject is a ſufficient Check to the *Antinomian Error*, viz. that becauſe Chriſt hath ſatisfied for us, therefore there is no Need of good Works: Chriſt's Obedience ſerves for ours. What need we do any Thing, ſince he hath done all? God chargeth all the Sins of Believers on Chriſt after Juſtification, and never reckons them as Sins in them. *The Law was not made for the Righteous*, therefore having no Law, they can't *tranſgreſs*, and conſequently Adultery, Fornication, and Murder committed by the Saints are no Sins, and God is not diſpleas'd with them. As for the *New Covenant*, it is without all *Conditions* whatſoever on Man's Part, and therefore all *good Works* are needleſs under the Goſpel. This lewd Doctrine ſprung up even in the Times of the Apoſtles; there were then a ſort of *Libertines*, who thought that when the Apoſtles, eſpecially St. *Paul*, taught that we *are ſaved only by Faith in Chriſt*, *without the Works of the Law*, they had a Licence given them to neglect all good Works. They thought they might *continue in Sin, that Grace might abound*, as you may gather from *Rom.* vi. 1. St. *Peter* ſpeaks of theſe kind of Men, who *promis'd* their Diſciples *Liberty*, 2 *Pet.* ii. 19. And from St. *John* we gather, that ſome were bold to ſay, *they had Fellowſhip with God*, and yet *walked in Darkneſs*, i. e. lived impurely and wickedly, 1 *John* i. 6. They pretended they *knew Chriſt*, that is, were owned and ſavour'd by him, and that he was their *Propitiation* (as he there ſpeaks) although *they kept not his Commandments*, 1 *John* ii. 4. St. *Jude* alſo ſpeaks of theſe Men, who (as he ſaith) *crept in unawares, and turned the Grace of God into Laſciviouſneſs*, v. 4. And a while after, the *Manicheans*, *Valentinians* and *Cerdonians* (a Party of the *Gnoſticks*) took up this pernicious Doctrine. It is probable it aroſe firſt (as I have intimated) from the Apoſtles preaching *Juſtification by Faith in Chriſt's Righteouſneſs*, and maintaining that we are ſaved by free Grace.

And ſo afterwards, at the Beginning of the *Reformation*, when this Doctrine was preach'd by *Luther* and others, the like Error aroſe again. When they ſpoke ſo much of free Juſtification by Faith without Works, ſome thence infer'd that no Obſervation of the moral Law was neceſſary, yea, that this Law was wholly abrogated. *Agricola* and *Iſlebius*, the Ringleaders of theſe *Antinomians*, preach'd up this erroneous Doctrine with great Earneſtneſs, and cried down the contrary Perſuaſion as *Popiſh*. And *we* have had ſome among us that have gone in the ſame Way: Their chief Teacher expreſly declares that * *God is not pleas'd with any of the Graces or Duties of his Servants: Nothing that they can do is acceptable to him. All their moſt righteous Performances are throwing Dirt in his Face.* He laughs at *Praying* and *Faſting*, he vilifies *Humiliation* and *Repentance*, and all *religious Services*, and all *perſonal Holineſs*, and pronounces a Believer to be under no Law or Tye whatſoever, and that Sin cannot hinder any Man's Salvation or Peace.

But I pray obſerve how all the Apoſtles, whoſe Epiſtles are tranſmitted to us, endeavour'd to antidote againſt this precious Doctrine betimes. *Do we* (ſaith St. *Paul*, make void *the Law through Faith* (as ſome had reported he ſaid)? *God forbid*, ſaith he, *yea, we eſtabliſh the Law*, Rom. iii. 31. We maintain the Obligation of the moral Law, whatever ſome Perſons are pleas'd to ſay of us; *we* firmly aſſert that this is the Rule of Mens Actions, and that according to this they ought to live ſoberly, righteouſly and godlily. And in *Rom.* xiii. 9. he reckons up five of the Commandments of the ſecond Table, and aſcertains us that they (or, *if there be any other Commandment*) are comprehended in the Law of *Love*, which is (as he adds) *the Fulfilling of the* moral *Law*, which is incumbent on us even now under the *Goſpel*, which is a Law of Love. That the *Galatians* might not miſtake him in this great and important Matter, you may take Notice in that Epiſtle, that after he had aſſerted the *Righteouſneſs of Faith*, and preferr'd it before the Righteouſneſs of Works, he lets them know in the cloſe, that he doth by no Means exclude good Works. *Brethren*, ſaith he, *ye*

* *Criſp.* Vol. 2. *Serm.* 6. &c.

have been call'd unto Liberty; only uſe not Liberty for an Occaſion to the Fleſh, Gal. v. 13. and then directs them in the remaining Part of the Chapter, to the avoiding of all *the Works of the Fleſh*, and the bringing forth in their Lives the *Fruits of the Spirit*. Yea, I might obſerve that this Apoſtle, who in the *former Part* of moſt of his Epiſtles, eſtabliſheth the Doctrine of God's Grace and free Juſtification, doth in the *latter Part* of them, expreſly commend and call for Obedience and Holineſs of Life.

* Lib. de fide et operibus.

As for St. *James*, not only * *Auguſtin*, but others of the Antients hold, that his Epiſtle was writ on Purpoſe againſt thoſe who falſely interpreted and perverted St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles, and aſſerted that Faith alone without good Works was ſufficient to Salvation, and that Men might be ſav'd, though they were diſſolute in their Lives.

Both the *Epiſtles* of St. *Peter* are Antidotes againſt this poiſonous Doctrine: In the former he adviſeth them, that they would *not uſe their Liberty for a Cloak of Maliciouſneſs*, he beſeeches them to *abſtain from fleſhly Luſts, and to have their Converſation honeſt among the Gentiles*, that they may not be *ſpoken againſt as evil Doers*; but that wicked Men *beholding their good Works may thereby glorify God*. He calls upon Subjects to *obey their King and Governours*, *he bids Servants be ſubject to their Maſters*, he teacheth the Duty of *Husbands* and *Wives* to each other, he intreats them to do and ſuffer all for a good Conſcience, to live and die in the Exerciſe and Diſcharge of their Duty. And then for the *ſecond Epiſtle*, the antient Fathers generally agree, that it was writ on purpoſe to beget a right Underſtanding of St. *Paul*'s Doctrine of Faith; the Apoſtle acquaints them, that they muſt join unto Faith a holy and godly Converſation; he bids them *add to their Faith Virtue*, *Knowledge* (i. e. an experimental and practical Knowledge) *Temperance*, *Patience*, *Godlineſs*, *Brotherly Kindneſs*, *Charity*. He exhorts them by good Works, as well as Faith to *make their Calling and Election ſure*. He condemneth thoſe falſe Teachers who *walk after the Fleſh*, *in the Luſts of Uncleanneſs*; he calls upon them to haſten their Repentance, and to be *found of Chriſt without Spot, and blameleſs*.

I Pass next to St. *John*, who, to baffle the fond Miſtakes of thoſe in his Days, expreſly declares in his firſt Epiſtle, and firſt Chapter, that thoſe *who ſay they have Fellowſhip with Chriſt*, and yet *walk in Darkneſs*, are Liars: He lets them know that it is abſolutely neceſſary *to walk in the Light*, that is, to live a godly and holy Life, to teſtify thereby the Truth of their *Communion with God*, and to aſſure them, that they are *cleanſed from their Sins*, i. e. that they are pardoned by the Blood of Jeſus. Again, he peremptorily tells them, that *he that ſaith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Liar, and the Truth is not in him*, Chap. ii. 4. And then he proceeds to caution them againſt theſe Seducers, and bids them *try the Spirits*; and notwithſtanding what they ſuggeſt, to continue in Obedience to all God's Commands, eſpecially that of *loving one another*. Laſtly, St. *Jude* very ſharply corrects the looſe Doctrine and diſorderly Manners of theſe falſe Teachers, *ungodly Men* who were *crept into* the Church, and *walk'd after their own Luſts*, and gave Incouragement to others to do ſo too. But he exhorts thoſe who were ſound in the Faith, and were not corrupted by thoſe Deceivers, to grow in Grace, and perſevere in Holineſs by the Aſſiſtance of the Spirit, which they were to implore by ardent Prayer.

† Mat. v. 17.

And all this is conformable to the Doctrine of our Bleſſed Lord and Saviour, who tells us, that † *He came not to deſtroy the Law, but to fulfil it*, and make it more compleat and perfect. By his Doctrine and Practice he taught the World, that the moral Law obligeth the faithful under the evangelical Diſpenſation, and that Obedience to the former is not oppoſite to the Grace of the latter. He conſtantly promoted good Works and holy Living, and bid his Diſciples ſhew their *Love to him by keeping his Commandments*, John xiv. 15.

You ſee then how fondly they diſcourſe, who ſay that, becauſe Chriſt hath done and ſuffer'd all Things for Man's Redemption, therefore there is nothing left for us to do. Indeed we have nothing to do that can further our Salvation by way of Merit, but we have ſomething to do, whereby we may ſhew our Thankfulneſs for Chriſt's Undertakings; we have a great deal to do whereby we may diſcover our Obedience to the divine Commands and Injunctions. God hath made a holy Life, and all religious Duties to be antecedent to eternal Rewards, to be neceſſary Conditions and Qualifications in order to future Happineſs. Though good Works and Obedience are not Conditions of *Juſtification*, yet they are of *Salvation:* They are requiſite in the Perſon who is juſtified, although they are wholly excluded from Juſtification itſelf. Or we may ſay, tho' they do not juſtify *meritoriouſly*, yet they do it *declaratively*, they ſhew that we are really of the number of thoſe who God accounteth Juſt and Righteous. *Abraham* was juſtified before God by Faith, as we read in *Gen.* xv. 6. *Rom.* iv. 3. namely, when he believed the Promiſe of the bleſſed Seed. This was above 30 Years before his offering his Son *Iſaac*, which when he did, he is ſaid by St. *James* to be *juſtified by his Works*; which is a quite different Juſtification from the former one. For as before he was juſtified before God by Faith, that is, by believing the Promiſe; ſo now he was juſtified before Men by his Work of offering his only Son; that is, it now plainly and viſibly appear'd to Men that he was a righteous Man, one that would do whatever God commanded him. This decides the whole Controverſy, that is rais'd about what St. *Paul*, and St. *James* ſay concerning *Juſtification*. They do not contradict one another, for St. *Paul* ſaith, we are juſtified before God by Faith alone; and St. *James* tells us, that we are juſtified before Men by our outward Works, and that thoſe Works are neceſſarily requir'd of us to juſtify our Faith. And many other Reaſons, we have alledged why *good Works* are to be done; and conſequently thoſe who ſpeak againſt them, eſpecially who condemn them as *Popiſh*, are very unreaſonable and abſurd in what they ſay.

2. THE Falſhood of the *Romaniſts* is hence confuted. They cry out againſt us, as thoſe who utterly diſlike both in Doctrine and Practice all good Works. They brand us with the Name of *Solifidians*, as if *Faith* monopolized all our Religion. We grant, there are *ſome* among us (as thoſe whom we have lately named) who deſerve this Title. But they are but few, and very inconſiderable: And therefore the Church of *Rome* deals unjuſtly in charging the *Proteſtants in general* with this. They make their Converts believe in their Writings, that it is our receiv'd Doctrine, that Believers are not bound to obſerve the moral Law, or do good Works: But this, though it be an uſual Calumny, is falſe and groundleſs; for it is the conſtant Doctrine of *Proteſtants*, that good Works are neceſſary to Salvation, and that no Man ſhall or can be ſaved, who takes not Care to adorn his Converſation with them. Hear what *Luther* ſaith, whom they ſpeak againſt above all others, for upholding the foreſaid Doctrine: His expreſs Words are theſe[*], *It is neceſſary, that godly Preachers ſhould as diligently teach and urge the Doctrine of good Works, as the Doctrine of Faith: For Satan is a deadly Enemy to both. Notwithſtanding, Faith muſt firſt be planted, for without Faith it is impoſſible to underſtand what good Works are, or what pleaſeth God.* With him concur all the *reformed* Churches in the World. He that will conſult the particular *Confeſſions, Catechiſms*, and *Articles* put forth by them may fully ſatisfy himſelf, that they unanimouſly aſſert the Neceſſity of good Works: That is, in all Perſons who are capable of them they are neceſſary. Infants, as they cannot do good Works, ſo not evil Ones: Such by God's Grace, without any Act of theirs, may be ſaved. But we ſpeak of thoſe who are able to underſtand and know their Duty, there are none amongſt them, that can be ſaved in the Church without performing of good Works. Indeed all that profeſs the reformed Religion affirm, that *Faith* is the Root of all Graces, that divine Virtue is the Baſis and Foundation of all good Works; this they maintain, and have good Reaſon to do ſo; but ſtill they hold that good and holy Works are indiſpenſibly requiſite in Chriſtianity, and that no Man can be excus'd from performing them; and that thoſe whoſe Lives are utterly devoid of them have no right Faith, and no true Religion. This is our unanimous Belief, Profeſſion and Doctrine, and the *Papiſts* are maliciouſly reproachful, when they accuſe us of the contrary.

3. FROM what hath been ſaid, we may diſcover the wrong Notions and Apprehenſions, which moſt Men have of good Works: I will inſtance more particularly in *Charity*, which is eminently call'd a *good Work*, but there is a great and common Miſtake about it. For that Charity which is enjoyn'd us in Scripture, is quite another Thing from what is practis'd at this Day, when the generality of the Poor are idle and lazy, debauch'd and prophane, and therefore a Houſe of Correction is the proper Charity in theſe Times. It might be further noted, that

[*] *On the Epiſtle to the* Galatians, ch. v.

that Charity is the Virtue of the *worſt* Men; always obſerve it, and you'll find that generally theſe are the Perſons who are the moſt liberal, and the moſt forward in Alms-deeds. It is vulgarly call'd *Charity*, but Indiſcretion, Prodigality and Profuſeneſs are the true Names for it. The *Turks* and *Papiſts* are the moſt charitable People in the World, if bare Relieving of others be true Charity; for the former are extravagantly kind to People in Hoſpitals, and to all that are ſick and diſeaſed, yea even to brute Animals, whoſe Lives they fondly preſerve, and keep them from being ſlaughter'd. 'Tis well known, that the latter boaſt of their Works of Charity, and will ſcarce allow of any other Perſons to be Maſters of that Virtue, but themſelves. And yet both theſe Sects, are the moſt cruel and inhuman upon the Face of the Earth. The latter are infamous for Perſecution and Bloodſhed, and the former are cruel, even to a Proverb. Now, 'tis ſtrange, if theſe Qualities can conſiſt with true Charity: And it is remarkable, that both theſe Parties boaſt of their Bloodſhed, as much as of their Works of Charity, and think they do God (as well as Men) good Service, and Merit by both. I doubt not, but ſomething like this may be found among ſome *Proteſtants*; they flatter themſelves that they expiate and atone for all Vices whatſoever, by Works of Bounty and Beneficence, falſly and dangerouſly making Uſe of that Text, *Charity ſhall cover the Multitude of Sins*, 1 Pet. iv. 8. Thus the true Nature of Charity is miſunderſtood.

AND ſo as to other good Works, all underſtanding Men agree that they ought to be done, but they greatly miſtake what good Works are. They think if they do the outward Acts of Religion, they do very well; if they faſt and pray, and hear God's Word, and receive the Euchariſt; if they perform the external Acts of Juſtice and Charity, their Doings cannot but be good and acceptable, and they need look after no more. They never conſider, whether their Faſting and Praying, and other Exerciſes of Devotion and Piety proceed from God's Grace and Holy Spirit in them, whether they be accompanied with Faith, and be the Reſult of good and holy Principles, and be done for good Ends, and in a good Manner. Alas! theſe and the like Things are not thought of. The generality of Chriſtian Men are ſatisfied with the Doing the bare Work itſelf, but are not concerned in the leaſt about the right Doing of it: And this is it which ſpoils the Works of Chriſtians, and makes them as bad as thoſe of ſome *Heathens*. This is a common Miſcarriage, and I wiſh it were ſeriouſly thought of, and laid to Heart. You muſt remember that it is not enough to do the bare Duty, unleſs you do it aright. To this Purpoſe you muſt conſider, that there are more Things required to a good Action, than to an evil One. *One* ſingle Defect makes an evil Action, but *many* Things go to conſtitute a good One, even all the Things above-named. They muſt every one of them concur, elſe it is not a good Work. Let the Actions of Men ſeem never ſo goodly and plauſible, yet without all theſe Qualifications they are of little Value. For according to the old *Jewiſh* Saying, God doth not ſo much attend to the *Quantity*, as the *Quality* of our Works; he regards not the external Act, though it be materially good, but he takes Notice, whether the Act be right as to the Manner of it, and all its Circumſtances. This is God's Way, but Man's Ways and Practices are generally contrary; they reſt in the naked Performance, and look no further: And hence it is, that moſt of thoſe Works which are counted good, and commonly paſs for ſuch, are not ſo. This diſcovers the groſs Miſtakes of the World.

4thly, THEN you are really concern'd to *examine* your Lives and Actions, and to ſee whether you be not of the Number of the miſtaken Perſons. There is no ſmall Difficulty in this Matter, and therefore you had need to be very ſtrict in your Examination; you cannot eaſily diſtinguiſh ſome evil Works from thoſe that are good, for Vices oftentimes put on a Shew and Diſguiſe of Virtue. Goodneſs is diſſembled and counterfeited. Virtue is not always what it ſeems to be: That paſſes for a religious and godly Act which is not: You ſhall obſerve that the ſame Action is not the ſame in different Perſons. *Cain* offer'd Sacrifice as well as *Abel*; and in the outward Performance it is likely there was no Difference: One ſeem'd to be as pious and religious as the other. But we are aſſured that one was good and acceptable, * *God teſtifying of his Gifts*, and that the other was rejected. Abraham *laugh'd* at the news of a Son, and † was not blamed: *Sarah laugh'd* and ‖ was chid for it. What was the Reaſon? Becauſe though they ſeem'd to be the

* Heb. xi. 4.

† Gen. xvii. 17.

‖ Ch. xviii. 12.

the like Actions, yet they differ'd very much: *Abraham* laugh'd from a due Affection of Joy, (and his Son *Iſaac* had his Name from this Laughter by the peculiar Injunction of God) but his Wife's Laughter proceeded from Incredulity and Diſtruſt. Moſes *numbred the People* three times, and did well in it, but *David* numbred his People once, and ſinn'd in doing ſo. Why? Becauſe the former did it by God's * Command, but the latter did it not only without a Command from God, but out of Pride and Vanity, to boaſt of the Multitude of his Forces. He placed his Strength in the great Numbers of the People: This made that Act of his unlawful. Thus the ſame Action is different, that is, 'tis lawful and unlawful according to the different Circumſtances of Perſons who do it. And as it is in *different Perſons*, ſo it is in the *ſame Perſons* at different Times; thoſe Actions which ſeem alike, prove to be very unlike, when you come to ſearch into them.

* Num. i. 19.

IT behoveth us therefore to enquire narrowly into our Actions, and to know whether they be rightly qualified, and duly circumſtantiated. Firſt we muſt labour to know whether we be juſtified Perſons, and whether our Works be ſprinkl'd with the Blood of Jeſus, whether they proceed from God's Grace and Spirit, and be done in Faith. Then, we muſt enquire whether we have uſed only lawful Means, and whether we have made God's Will and Word the Rule of all our Doings. Next, we muſt be very careful to look into the Springs and Fountains of our Actions: Do all our Duties proceed from an enlightn'd Underſtanding, from a clear Will and Choice, and from Affections that are well diſpos'd? Do we exert Acts of Sobriety, Charity, Juſtice and Piety out of a ſincere Love of God and Goodneſs, and a child-like Fear of diſpleaſing him? Do we act in Religion with Zeal and Fervency of Spirit, with Joy and Delight, and are ſincere and upright in all we do? If we act not from theſe Principles, our Religion is but a Piece of Mechaniſm, and Matter and Motion will ſolve all the Phænomena's of it. Further, let us examine whether our Ends as well as our *Principles* be good, whether our Intentions be fix'd aright, whether we do not act on falſe and ſiniſter Deſigns? eſpecially let us ask ourſelves whether we make God's Glory our End in all things? Whether we aim at this above all, and whether all other Deſigns be in order only to this, and ſubordinate to it? Laſtly, to include all, we muſt be inquiſitive whether the true Manner, as well as Matter of all our Actions be obſerv'd? Are our Works in all the Circumſtances and Appertinences ſuch as God hath commanded? This is the great Diſtinction of Actions; and tho' Men generally do not mind it, yet God always doth, and meaſures all we do by it. Let us not therefore deceive and flatter our ſelves, but faithfully and impartially ſearch into our Ways, and try them by thoſe Rules which I have laid down, and which will certainly diſcover whether our Works be good or no.

5. WHEN you have *examined* the true Nature of good Works, then urge this upon yourſelves that you are *indiſpenſibly obliged to do them.* Being throughly perſuaded of the Neceſſity of them, preſs the Practice of them on yourſelves and on others. It is the ſpecial Office and Employment of the Miniſters of the Goſpel, *to put the People in mind to be ready to every good Work*, Tit. iii. 1. And again, v. 8. *This is a faithful Saying, and theſe things I will that thou affirm conſtantly, that they who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good Works.* The Manner of propounding this Duty here is obſervable, for it is uſher'd in with this Preface, *This is a faithful Saying*, which ſhews the Weight and Importance of what is here propounded, for the Apoſtle never uſes this Stile but † when he moſt ſeriouſly and earneſtly aſſerts ſomething which is very worthy of being attended to. This is a *faithful Saying*, i. e. this which I am to offer to you concerning good Works is worthy of your Belief, you ought to give Faith and Credit to it. Or, this is a *faithful Saying*, that is, it will never fruſtrate and deceive you, you may certainly truſt to it. Therefore whatever elſe you omit, forget not this, urge this Doctrine of good Works, call on your People earneſtly and conſtantly to practiſe this Doctrine, to add to their Faith Works. And St. *Paul* himſelf was not forgetful to act according to his own Advice here. It is worth our obſerving that this Apoſtle, who was ſo much for Faith, and was ſuch a zealous Champion for it, was alſo a very great and eminent Aſſertor of *good Works*, he expreſly makes Mention of them, and exhorts the Chriſtians to the Performance of them in no leſs then eighteen diſtinct Places in his *Epiſtles.*

† 1 Tim. i. 15. iv. 9.

WE who are ſpiritual Paſtors and Inſtructors of Souls ought to follow his Example, and not be afraid (as ſome are) to mention good Works in our Sermons and Diſcourſes: Yea, we muſt eſteem it our neceſſary Duty to urge and often inculcate good Works. This is that which I am doing this Day by Virtue of my miniſterial Office. I call upon you, I exhort you, I intreat you to give yourſelves to the Practice of good Works. I do not commend to you *popiſh Works*, Works of *Perfection*, Works of *Merit* and *Supererogation*. But I commend unto you thoſe Works which our Bleſſed Saviour and his Apoſtles have enjoined us, the Qualifications of which I have fully ſet before you. Shew out of a good Converſation ſuch Works as theſe. Let your Light ſhine before Men, let the internal Light of Grace break forth into an external Splendour: Let the inward Flame of Virtue in your Breaſts ſhine out in the viſible Exerciſe of Piety, Righteouſneſs, Temperance, Mercifulneſs, Peaceableneſs, and the like. Lay aſide Diſputes and Quarrels, ſhake off all Controverſies, and fix in good earneſt upon this which is your unqueſtionable and indiſpenſible Concern.

THAT you may ſucceſsfully do ſo, obſerve theſe four plain and brief Directions,

1. *BEG the Aſſiſtance of the Spirit.* Theſe are no mean and common Works which I have ſet before you as that Duty: They require great Strength and Power to exert them. You cannot do theſe things but thro' Chriſt and his Spirit. You muſt have extraordinary Aid and Help to accompliſh them: Therefore pray for ſupernatural Aſſiſtance.

2. *STUDY the Scriptures.* There and there only you will find Inſtructions for the performing of Works acceptable to God. Other Writings come ſhort of this, mere moral Rules of Righteouſneſs will prove deficient, the higheſt Strains of Philoſophy will be ineffectual, becauſe they are the Reſult only of natural Light and common Reaſon. Wherefore apply yourſelves to the Study of the inſpired Writings, that thereby you may *be perfect, throughly furniſh'd unto all good Works.*

3. *SET before you the Example of the Saints*, for by viewing of them you will not only learn what to do, but you will be taught *not to be weary in well doing.* For thoſe holy Servants of God were ſingular Patterns of all Virtue and Godlineſs, and they alſo perſevered in them to the End of their Lives; eſpecially fix your Eyes on the Example of the Primitive Chriſtians, thoſe good Men in the old Times before Faith was heard of without Works, before Religion was made a mere Name and Notion. O think of the Lives of thoſe excellent Perſons, remember how they behaved themſelves, and brought Credit and Honour to Chriſtianity by the Strictneſs of their Converſation.

4*thly*, and laſtly, *REDEEM and improve the Time.* Fix it on your Thoughts that you have a good deal of Work to do, but your Time to do it in is ſhort and ſoon expiring. Wherefore make good Uſe of all your Minutes, and let none of them paſs away in Idleneſs or Folly. Be careful to know your Duty, and then diſpatch it with Faithfulneſs and Expedition.

* Heb. xiii. 20, 21, 22. * *Now the God of Peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlaſting Covenant, make you perfect in every good Work to do his Will, working in you that which is well pleaſing in his Sight, through Jeſus Chriſt, to whom be Glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

A
DISCOURSE
OF THE
NATURE
OF AN
Inoffenſive CONSCIENCE.

Acts xxiv. 16.

And herein do I exerciſe my ſelf, to have always a Conſcience void of Offence towards God and towards Men.

WE read in this Chapter that St. *Paul* being accuſed by the *Jews* was brought from *Jeruſalem* to *Cæſarea*, to anſwer for himſelf before *Felix*. *Tertullus*, the Emperor's Advocate, was the Lawyer whom they fee'd and employ'd in this Cauſe, who having in the Entrance of his quaint Oration flatter'd the Judge, proceeded next to the Charge itſelf, wherein St. *Paul* is accuſed firſt as a factious and ſeditious Perſon, one that ſpoke againſt the preſent Government, and diſturbed the Peace. * *We have found this Man a peſtilent Fellow, and a Mover of Sedition among all the Jews throughout the World.* * Ver. 5. Again, he is charged to be not only diſaffected to the State, but to the Church: He is a Promoter of a new Religion. † *We have found this Man a Ringleader of the Sect of the Nazarenes.* † Ver. 5. Laſtly, he is repreſented as one that § *prophaned the Temple*; he brought (as they pretended) *Gentiles* into that Part of the Temple where no ſuch Perſons were permitted to enter. § Ver. 6. This is the Charge, theſe are the heinous Crimes that are objected againſt him.

Now hear St. *Paul*'s Anſwer, which hath Reſpect to the three particular Branches of his Accuſation. Firſt, as to *Sedition*, he lets them know that he is clear of that, *v.* 12. *They neither found me in the Temple diſputing with any Man, neither raiſing up the People, neither in the Synagogue, nor in the City.* Wherever I came I behaved my ſelf quietly, ſo that there can be no Proof at all of my making any Diſturbance, and ſhewing myſelf given to Faction and Sedition. Second-

* v. 14. ly as to Religion, his Defence was this, * *I confeſs that after the Way which*
they call Hereſy, ſo worſhip I the God of my Father; I muſt needs ſay I ſerve God in
that old Way of Religion wherein my Anceſtors the holy Patriarchs and Prophets
and all the Saints ſerved him: And though *Tertullus* and others diſgracefully call it
a *Sect* or *Hereſy*, it ſhall not diſcourage me from imbracing it and holding it faſt.
† v. 15. And if you would have a more particular Account of my Religion, it is this, † *I*
have Hope towards God, which yourſelves alſo allow, that there ſhall be a Reſurrection
of the Dead, both of the Juſt and Unjuſt; I hold that there is another Life after this,
and though we ſeem to periſh in the Grave, yet there will a Day come when all
Men ſhall be rais'd out of their Aſhes, in order to their appearing before the Judgment-ſeat.
Moreover, I declare to you that my Religion, which you ſpeak againſt
and implead me for, ingages me to keep a good Conſcience, and to live holily
and righteouſly. *Herein do I exerciſe my ſelf*, &c.

AND then as for the laſt Part of the Indictment, he acquaints them that
§ v. 17. he, having been travelling abroad *many Years*, return'd at laſt § *bringing Alms to*
his Nation, and Offerings, which occaſion'd his repairing to the *Temple*: Beſides
†† v. 18. that he was under a *Nazarite*'s Vow, and therefore went to †† *purify himſelf* in
that Place, the Occaſion of which you may read in Acts xxi. 23, 24. He pleads
therefore that his Accuſation as to this Matter was groundleſs and falſe. And
** v. 19. *ex abundanti* he alledges this, that his Accuſers ** *ought to have been there* in
Court *before* the Judge, and to have *objected* theſe things againſt him in the open Hearing of all, which they declining did tacitly pronounce him innocent. This is the Defendent's Plea, but I ſhall at preſent inſiſt only upon ſome part of it, *viz.* his Apology in behalf of his *Religion*; and here I ſhall only treat of that Clauſe which is before us, which gives us a brief Account of his conſcientious Deportment in the World, *Herein do I exerciſe myſelf to have always a Conſcience void of Offence towards God and towards Men.*

AS if St. *Paul* had ſaid, I ſtand here at the Bar arraigned for Irreligion and Prophaneneſs, for Treaſon and Sedition, I am repreſented a Criminal both againſt God and Man: But I am far from being guilty of either of theſe Crimes, for the Goſpel which I preach condemneth theſe things; and my Conſcience, I thank God, never led me to the allowing, much leſs the practiſing of them. For I muſt tell you, both Judge and Plaintifs, I have exerciſed myſelf ever ſince I was call'd by the Grace of God to believe in his Son Jeſus, and to imbrace his Goſpel, and to own the chriſtian Faith, I have (I ſay) exerciſed and inured myſelf to keep a good Conſcience, to know and underſtand my Duty, and to have an affectionate Senſe of it on my Heart, and likewiſe to ſhew this in my Converſation and Demeanour towards God and Men. Wherefore I am ſatisfied, and comfort myſelf with this, that I am not guilty of the Crimes which I am charg'd with: My Conſcience beareth me Witneſs, that it hath been my hearty Deſire, Purpoſe and Indeavour to ſerve God faithfully, and to diſcharge my Duty towards all Men. Thus our Apoſtle.

AND we may obſerve that this is his wonted Plea: He delights to defend himſelf againſt his Adverſaries by alledging his *conſcientious Living*. Thus when he pleaded his Cauſe before the Council he cried out, *Men and Brethren, I have lived in all good Conſcience before God until this Day*, Acts xxiii. 1. Ever ſince I knew my Duty aright, I have lived in all Honeſty and Integrity, I have not acted againſt the Dictates of my Mind, but I have indeavour'd to walk according to that Light which God hath ſet up in my Soul, and which he hath directed me to by his holy Word. But you may obſerve that not only when he was call'd to plead for himſelf, publickly, but when he gives an Account of himſelf more privately in his *Epiſtles*, he loves to inſiſt upon this, *Our rejoicing is this, the Teſtimony of our Conſcience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, we have had our Converſation in the World*, 2 Cor. i. 12. And ſo in Heb. xiii. 18. *We truſt we have a good Conſcience, in all things willing to live honeſtly.* And in other Places, as *Rom.* ix. 1. and 2 *Tim.* 1. 3. he pleads the Goodneſs of his Conſcience, the ſame Plea with this in the Text, *a Conſcience void of Offence towards God and towards Men.*

IN the Words then are obſervable, 1. St. *Paul*'s chriſtian Practice and Employment, *Herein do I exerciſe myſelf, to have a Conſcience void of Offence.* 2. The Latitude and Extent of it. 1. As to Time, *always.* 2. As to the Objects, *God and Men.* The practical Obſervation from the whole may be this, that it is the conſtant Exerciſe of a good Chriſtian to keep an offenceleſs Conſcience both in regard of his Duty to God and to Men. In treating of this, I will ſhew, 1. What *Conſcience* is. 2. What a Conſcience *void of Offence toward God and Man* is. 3. What it is to *exerciſe ourſelves* to have ſuch a Conſcience.

I. I WILL treat of the Nature and Office of *Conſcience.* Where firſt I muſt premiſe this, that it is generally receiv'd for Truth, that the *Soul* or *Mind* of Man, hath divers Denominations from its Diverſity of Powers and Functions. When it apprehends and conceives of Things, it is call'd the *Underſtanding*; when it diſcourſes, *Reaſon*; when it determines, *Judgment*; when it chooſes, *Will*; when it reflects on itſelf and its Actions, *Conſcience:* And the general Name for the Soul, when it exerts all theſe, is *Cogitation.* Theſe all are no other than the Mind of Man conceiving or underſtanding, reaſoning, judging, willing, being conſcious to itſelf, and (which comprehends all theſe) thinking. Or, if this Way of ſpeaking be diſliked, that is, if ſome are unwilling to ſay, that theſe are ſeveral Names of the ſame Being, or that the Underſtanding, Reaſoning, *&c.* are the Soul itſelf differently diſpoſed, then we may expreſs ourſelves thus; we may ſay theſe are ſo many ſeveral *Acts* or *Operations* of the ſame Soul or Mind: The Operation of the Soul of Man when it apprehends, is the Intellect; when it argues, it is the Reaſon; when it determines, it is the Judgment; when it makes a Choice, it is the Will; when it reflects on itſelf, it is the Conſcience: And the general Name of all theſe Operations of the rational Soul is Thinking.

AS for that particular Act or Operation of human Souls, call'd the *Conſcience*, though it be uſually taken for a *reflex Act* of the Soul, yet I muſt needs ſay, this is but a narrow and reſtrained Acception of the Word *Conſcience:* And therefore being to diſplay the true Nature of Conſcience, I muſt not take it here in its limited and confined Senſe, but in its full and utmoſt Extent. Though it be ſometimes (and that very uſefully) appropriated to the Mind, as it makes *Reflections* on itſelf, and its own Actions, which is the principal Work of Conſcience, and therefore gives it its Denomination, as you ſhall hear afterwards; yet here I muſt conſider it in its more common and large Signification. The Conſcience of Man hath its *direct* as well as *reflex Acts*, and therefore we cannot do right to this Subject, unleſs we ſpeak of one, as well as the other.

Firſt, THEN let us conſider the *direct Acts* of Conſcience, the firſt whereof is *to know. Conſcience* includes *Science.* There muſt neceſſarily be in it the Faculty of Knowledge, the Dictate of the Underſtanding, and that both *ſpeculative* and *practical.* The former is that, whereby we aſſent to ſuch *ſpeculative Propoſitions*, as contain in them the firſt Truths, and ſuch as are of themſelves known; as *it is impoſſible for a Thing to be, and not to be at the ſame Time*, &c. By the latter, we yield Aſſent to *practical Principles* of Truth, as that *Good is to be imbraced*, and *Evil to be refuſed.* Though it is true, that of theſe two the practical Underſtanding is *chiefly* to be conſider'd, when we ſpeak of *Conſcience:* For *Conſcience* in this differs from bare Knowledge and Underſtanding and idle Speculation, that it is in order to *Action* and *Practice.* The very firſt and moſt obvious Notion which we have of *Conſcience*, is, that it is the Mind of Man indued with Principles, Laws or Rules in order to Practice. And theſe are either written in the Tables of the Heart originally, and are the Laws of Reaſon and natural Religion, called by the moral Philoſophers *common Notices*, and by St. *Paul that which may be known of God*, Rom. i. 19. And *the Law of the Mind*, Rom. vii. 23. in which reſpect the *Gentiles* are ſaid to be *a Law unto themſelves*, Rom. ii. 14. Or elſe they are revealed Truths, *i. e.* thoſe practical Principles and Rules of Righteouſneſs, which are learnt from the holy Scripture. In reſpect of both theſe, *Conſcience* is the Mind of Man furniſh'd with practical Principles and Perſuaſions, relating to either Good or Evil, Virtue or Vice: Or, if you will ſpeak otherwiſe, *Conſcience* is the Apprehenſion and Perſuaſion we have in our Minds concerning theſe. This is *Conſcience*, if you conſider it, as to its firſt and leading Act, which is *Knowledge.*

2. THE next Act or Office of it is to *lay up* theſe practical Principles and Rules. The Mind is made the *Ark*, wherein theſe *Laws* are depoſited, and kept ſafe. The Conſcience is a *Court of Record*, and that not only in regard of theſe Laws and Rules, but likewiſe in reſpect of all the Actions which are done

either in Conformity or Contrariety to them. The Soul of Man *regiſters* all that is done, or left undone by him, either according to or againſt thoſe Laws. Both good and evil Actions (and under theſe we compriſe all that we think, deſign, ſay, or do), though they ſeem to be paſt and gone, remain upon Record, and are ſtill kept in Memory to be produced upon Occaſion.

3. THE Mind of Man having furniſh'd itſelf with Principles and Laws both moral and religious, and having laid them up ſafe; now in the next Place it *makes uſe of* them, and *applies* them. So that the third Office of *Conſcience* is to *diſcern* and *judge* concerning the Things, which are propounded to us. The Conſcience ſits Judge of the Truth or Error, but eſpecially of the Goodneſs or Evil of what is ſet before us; for the main Work of this Faculty (as hath been ſaid) is in order to Practice. It judges what is true or falſe, but chiefly what is lawful or unlawful. Its principal Buſineſs is to diſcern Good from Evil, to deſcry whether this or that Action, which we have Occaſion to perform, be virtuous or vitious, juſt or unjuſt.

WHEREUPON 4*thly*, The *Conſcience* becomes a *Monitor*, and gives Notice of ſuch an Action to be done, or ſuch a one to be left undone: Yea, it *dictates* this or that to be done, or not done. It is a *Guide* not only ſhewing us the Way, but leading us in it, continually governing us in the Diſcharge of all moral and religious Actions. And as this practical Judgment placed in the Mind of Man, admoniſheth and inſtructeth him in general concerning what is his Duty, ſo it *determineth* him to do this or that particular Action: It not only *directeth* but *fixeth* him: It bids him do this or that, and *no other*: It obligeth him to this *individual* Thing, and exacts Obedience of him. All this may be referred to the *monitory Office* of Conſcience, though if we would be nice and curious, we might find here ſo many *diſtinct* Acts of this Faculty.

5. THE next Office of this noble Function of the Soul of Man, is to *ſtir him up* to do Good, and *pull him back* from doing Evil. The *Will* muſt be inclined to chooſe that which is virtuous and holy: For *Conſcience includes* in it an Act of the *Will*, as well as of the *Underſtanding*. And the Will being thus inclined and diſpoſed, will *puſh us on* to all good and virtuous Undertakings, and *call us off* from all thoſe Enterprizes which are of a contrary Nature. This is the *direct* Influence, and Operation of Conſcience.

Secondly, WE are to conſider it as to its *reflex Acts*: And then its Abilities and Offices are ſuch as theſe,

1. TO call to Mind, and thereby to know that ſuch and ſuch Things *have been done*. As *Conſcience* is ſeated in the *Underſtanding*, and the *retentive* Part of the *Memory*; (as we have before ſhew'd) ſo it is likewiſe placed in that Part, which is properly call'd *Remembrance*, which is a Retrieving and Calling back of Things paſt; which is done, and cannot be otherwiſe than by a *reflex* Act of the Mind: As when *Joſeph*'s Brethren recall'd their Sin to Mind, which had been committed above twenty Years before. Hereby a Man comes to have a *Knowledge of himſelf*, whence it is that this Faculty is call'd *Conſcience*. For a Man may be conſider'd two Ways. *Firſt*, As he doth ſuch or ſuch a Thing. *Secondly*, As he reflects on himſelf, and knows that he hath done ſuch a Thing: In which latter Conſideration he is as 'twere diſtinguiſh'd from himſelf, he may be look'd upon as another Perſon, though at the ſame time he doth but know himſelf, he is conſcious to his own Actions. This gives us a right Idea of *Conſcience*, it is that reflex Knowledge, whereby a Man is *acquainted with himſelf*, and thence it hath its Name.

2. WITH this may be joined the *witneſſing Power* of the Conſcience. This hath been an Inſpector and Superviſor of all Thoughts, Words and Actions that have paſs'd, and ſo now it comes in as a *Witneſs*, and atteſteth whatever hath been done or not done: And this it teſtifieth for or againſt us. This Office of Conſcience is not only mention'd by St. *Paul*, as when ſpeaking of the *Gentiles*, who lived and acted according to the Law of Nature, he ſaith, that as to thoſe Things, *their Conſcience bore them Witneſs*, Rom. ii. 15. And ſo other Places of Scripture (as you ſhall hear afterwards) mention this Office: But it is often ſpoken of in the Writings of moral Philoſophers, and in the very Ethicks of the *Pagans*; which ſhews, that it is a plain and obvious Thing, and owned by the Light of Nature. This is the unanimous Suffrage of all Mankind, that *Conſci-*

ence is a continual *Witneſs* in every one's Breaſt, yea that it is a Thouſand Witneſſes.

WHEN a Man *remembers*, and *knows*, and *teſtifieth* within himſelf, that he hath done ſuch Things, he proceeds to *try* and *examine* them. By Virtue of this excellent Faculty, we looking back on what we have done, enquire into the Nature of our Doings, and bring them to an exact Scrutiny. This we do by making Uſe of thoſe Principles and Rules which our Minds are ſtock'd with, which (as I ſaid before) are either a natural or poſitive Law, *viz. Reaſon*, the Law of Nature, or *Scripture*, the revealed Will of God. Theſe Rules are apply'd to every Action, and thereby 'tis eaſy to know of what Quality they are, whether they be according to Reaſon and the Word of God, or not; and conſequently whether they be good or evil. This is one grand Employment of Conſcience: This Lawgiver brings ſorth theſe Laws, produces theſe practical Principles and Truths, which it had treaſur'd up, and by applying them to all the paſt Actions of our Lives, *tries* and *examines* what they are.

4. UPON this Trial the Conſcience *finds the Bill:* For it reflects upon the *Rules* and the *Actions* ſo long, and compares them ſo diligently, that it knows how to *judge* concerning theſe latter; and accordingly it doth ſo, as to the Rectitude or Pravity of them: It pronounceth thoſe Actions either to be lawful or unlawful, holy or ſinful.

5. UPON this it either *accuſeth* or *excuſeth the Perſons* who have done theſe Things; that is, it accuſeth them if they have done ill, or it excuſeth if they have done well. *This* and the *Witneſſing* of Conſcience are join'd together by St. *Paul*, ſpeaking of the Gentiles, 2 Rom. 15. *Their Conſcience bearing Witneſs, and their Thoughts accuſing, or elſe excuſing one another:* For the witneſſing Power of Conſcience contributes to this, it ſetting Things before the Mind, and atteſting them to be true: Whence there is Matter either for accuſing or excuſing, *i. e.* for preferring a farther Indictment againſt us, or for pleading on our Behalf. Which makes Way for

(*6thly*) THE next Office of Conſcience, which is to *condemn* or *abſolve*. The Conſcience (as you heard before) is *Judge* of a Man's Actions, or rather *Jury*; it brings in its Verdict concerning them; it declares whether the Perſon who did them be guilty or not. But this is not all, the Conſcience next executes the *proper Office of a Judge*; i. e. it paſſes *Sentence* not only on the Actions, but on the Perſon; it pronounces Judgment as to his bad or good State. For *Conſcience* is that Power in the Soul of Man, whereby he reflecting on himſelf judges of his Condition in Relation to God; that is, as he is liable to the Judgment and Tribunal of Heaven. As he diſcerns and judges the Goodneſs or Evil of his Actions, ſo he alſo diſcerns whether they ſhall be follow'd with Reward or Puniſhment. Yea,

(*7thly* and) LASTLY, Conſcience itſelf hath a Power to *reward* or *puniſh*. This is the utmoſt Reſult of all, this is the laſt Thing that this Faculty in Man can do. The Conſcience is not only *Judge* but *Executioner:* After it hath paſs'd the Sentence of Condemnation on a Man, it haunts and purſues him, and inflicts all the Puniſhment it can upon him. It moſt ſeverely chaſtiſes and reproves him, grieves and wounds him, torments and crucifies him, and will not ſuffer him to enjoy any Reſt and Quiet. This it doth partly by bearing Witneſs to all the ſinful Actions of a Man's Life, and by putting him in continual Remembrance of them, *bringing forth out of its Treaſure Things new and old*, and urging and preſſing them on his Mind; and partly by repreſenting to him, and ſetting before his Eyes the Wrath of God, due to all impenitent Sinners, and particularly to him, and by putting him in Mind of thoſe everlaſting Burnings, which ſhall unavoidably be his Portion. Hereby the Sinner is fill'd with Fear and Horror, with Regret and Anguiſh, with Pain and Torture. His Conſcience is now a Rack to him, and he is uneaſy and reſtleſs, and knows not how to extricate himſelf out of that Miſery: He feels even before-hand the future Pains, and is ſcorch'd with the Flames of the infernal Pit.

Again, CONSCIENCE hath Power to *reward* as well as to *puniſh*. *He that is of a merry Heart*, he that is *good in Heart*, as it is in the Hebrew, *i. e.* he that hath a good Conſcience, *hath a continual Feaſt*, ſaith *Solomon*, Prov. 15. he is conſtantly entertained with Delight and Joy. For it is the Office of the Conſcience

ſcience to chear and comfort a Man, to yield him unſpeakable Solaces and Feſtivities, and that in the greateſt Calamities and Troubles of this World. This it doth by teſtifying concerning the Innocency of his paſt Life, and his hearty Repentance for all his Failings, and his ſincere and unfeigned Endeavours to pleaſe God and walk in his Ways. Hence the Apoſtle affirms of himſelf, that *his Conſcience bore him Witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt*, *that he had great Sorrow* for the Rejection of the Jews, and that he heartily wiſh'd their Welfare and Salvation, *Rom.* ix. 1. And in 2 *Cor.* i. 12. he ſpeaks again of this *Teſtimony of his Conſcience*, and the happy Effect of it. And this *merry Heart*, this *Solace of Conſcience* is wrought in every good Chriſtian, not only by its bearing Witneſs, upon a reflecting on what hath been done by him, but chiefly by conſidering what hath been done by another; that is, by the comfortable and happy Reflection on the Undertakings of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and his perfect and ſinleſs Obedience whereby he ſatisfy'd the divine Juſtice, and appeaſed the incenſed Majeſty of Heaven, and thereby accompliſh'd our Redemption and Salvation: For without the Blood of Jeſus the Conſcience can find no Peace and Satisfaction. But even under the Senſe of the Failings and Miſcarriages of our Lives it is chear'd and refreſh'd by the Conſideration of the bleſſed Atonement made by the Son of God. Again, the Conſcience hath great Conſolation adminiſter'd to it by its looking forward, and ſeeing what is to come; *viz.* by viewing that Fulneſs of Joy and Pleaſure which is at God's right Hand, the Fruition of which is promis'd to all thoſe who have lived uprightly: And thus in ſome meaſure he partakes of the Bleſſedneſs of Heaven before he arrives there.

ALL theſe Things *Conſcience* doth; for it is a Mixture of divers Faculties, Intellect, Will, and Memory; eſpecially it is made up of Underſtanding and Memory, and of the direct and reflex Acts of both of them. It is a Lawgiver, furniſhing us with Laws reſpecting all Morality and Religion; it is a Regiſter and Remembrancer; it is a Monitor and Dictator; it is an Accuſer and an Advocate; it is Witneſs, Jury, Judge, Puniſher and Rewarder. Some have compriſed the whole Work of Conſcience in a practical *Syllogiſm*, as thus, He that doth Righteouſneſs, is righteous: I by the Grace of God do Righteouſneſs; therefore I am righteous. He that believes ſhall be ſaved: I believe; therefore I ſhall be ſaved. Or, on the contrary, he that believes not ſhall be damned: I believe not; therefore I ſhall be damned. Here, and in the like Syllogiſms, a Habit of practical Principles, the Fountain and Treaſury of Rules and Directions, makes the *major Propoſition*; the Application of theſe to our Actions frames the *minor*; and then the *Concluſion* is made by the Teſtimony of Conſcience affirming or denying that our Actions are thus and thus. To repreſent to your Eye at one View all that I have ſaid concerning Conſcience, both as 'tis *direct* and *reflex*, I have framed this following Diagram,

THE *Direct* Acts of *Conſcience*, reſpecting thoſe Actions which are *to be done*, are

1. Knowing,
2. Retaining in Memory,
3. Judging,
4. Admoniſhing,
5. Directing,
6. Determining,
7. Exciting.

THE *Reflex* Acts of *Conſcience*, reſpecting *paſt Actions*, are

1. Remembring,
2. Knowing,
3. Witneſſing,
4. Examining,
5. Judging,
6. Accuſing,
7. Excuſing,
8. Condemning,
9. Abſolving,
10. Puniſhing,
11. Rewarding.

HERE you have the diſtinct Operations of Conſcience, both as it is *direct* and *reflex*, ſet down, and you cannot but obſerve that *Knowledge* and *Memory* are the radical Acts of it, and that all the reſt ſpring from thoſe.

IF it be alledg'd that I have no where made Mention of a *doubting Conſcience*, which all the Writings of Divines on this Subject ſpeak of, I have this to ſay, that when a Man's Mind *doubts*, it is in Suſpenſe, it doth not at that Time *act*, at leaſt it performs none of the foreſaid Offices ſteadily. A *doubting Conſcience* is when the Arguments on both Sides are ſuch, that we dare not pitch upon either,

ther, but we hang between, and embrace neither Side. It is a Hovering of the Mind, and Forbearing to act, and therefore properly and ſtrictly ſpeaking, that which we call a doubting Conſcience is no Conſcience. But if you pleaſe you may refer it to the firſt Head of this Part of my Diſcourſe, *viz. Knowledge*, the firſt eſſential Thing in Conſcience: For *Doubting* proceeds from Want of *ſufficient Knowledge*, and from Weakneſs of Judgment. We *doubt*, when we have not a competent Inſight into the Matters that are before us; when we have not a right Underſtanding of our Rule, and the Things to which it is to be applied; when we diſpute about the Senſe of the Law, and ſo are uncertain what to determine. Or, you may refer it to the Office of Conſcience *after* Actions are done; for a *dubious* or *ſcrupulous Conſcience* is not determin'd, whether it ſhould approve or condemn what is done; which ſtill proceeds from a weak and imperfect Knowledge. This is a brief, but true Account of the *Nature* and *Offices* of *Conſcience*, which was the firſt Thing I undertook to ſhew you.

II. HAVING thus in general ſpoken of *Conſcience*, I will now particularly deſcribe a *good Conſcience*; that is, the Conſcience here ſpoken of in the Text, *void of Offence towards God and towards Men*. And this Part of my Diſcourſe will be, as it were, a particular Application, of what I have already ſaid. Then the *Conſcience* is *good*, when it duly and rightly diſchargeth all the aforeſaid Offices.

Firſt, WHEN it demeans it ſelf aright in order to the *Actions which are to be done*; when it lays in a ſufficient Stock of Principles, and thereby comes to know its Duty, and to be well acquainted with the Things that are to be entered upon. This is the Foundation of all, and as without this there can be no acting aright, ſo there can be no *good Conſcience*; for our Duty both towards God and Men is built upon ſound Principles: Therefore no *ignorant* Man can be Maſter of a good Conſcience; he may ſeem indeed to have it, and it is often claimed by ſuch Men, eſpecially in the Church of *Rome*; but it is impoſſible they ſhould be poſſeſs'd of it: For *Conſcience*, (as I have ſaid) ſuppoſeth *Science*, much more a *good Conſcience* includes it, and can never be ſeparated from it. Therefore, 'tis abſurd and ridiculous to ſay, that Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion, or the Nurſe of any religious Performances.

AND as the *ignorant* Man, ſo likewiſe the *erroneous* cannot have a good Conſcience; for as the former hath *no Principles*, ſo the latter hath thoſe which are falſe; which can never be the Ground of good Actions or a good Conſcicence. For every Action is good, that is conformable to a right Rule, and every one is evil, that is repugnant to that Rule: And it is certain, as a Man's Actions, ſo his Conſcience is good or evil, as it is anſwerable to its *Rule*; that is, good Principles and Laws, borrowed either from right Reaſon, or from the Word of God, in the Sacred Scriptures. We may then confidently aſſert, that a true and right Conſcience is that which is founded on true Knowledge, which hath a right Rule to act by: As on the contrary, an erroneous Conſcience is that which is deſtitute of right Principles and Rules, and is no ways agreeable to them.

AGAIN, It is requiſite to a *good Conſcience*, that it *judge impartially*, according to theſe Principles; that it *diſcerns* thoſe Things to be good, which are really ſo, and reckons thoſe Things to be evil, which are indeed ſuch. This is *true Judging*: Whereas the evil and depraved Conſcience never faithfully tells what is Good, and what is Evil; but always gives Judgment, either partially or falſly.

ALSO, When the Conſcience, by Virtue of right Judging, leads a Man into the right Way, and directs and determines him to that particular Action and Duty which he ought to diſcharge; then there is no Cauſe of doubting that it is a *good Conſcience*, a Conſcience duly enlightned, and rightly informed. For when the Mind is dark, and ignorant, it can give no Direction; and when it is erroneous, it gives a wrong one, it directs a Man to the Commiſſion of Sin; and indeed, no other thing can be expected: For how can the Mind, which is corrupted and defiled with Error and unſound Doctrine, *guide* and *direct* a Man into the Way of Purity and Holineſs?

FURTHER, When the Conſcience ſtrongly ſollicites, and powerfully ſtirs a Man to the actual Exertment of Virtue and Holineſs, when it makes him forward and willing to comply with the divine Commands; it is a certain Sign, that it is a rectified Conſcience: For, now the Will, which is a conſiderable Ingredient of the practical Conſcience, and which is eſſential to every good Action, is effectually engaged, according to that of the Apoſtle, *Heb.* xiii. 18. *We truſt we have a good Conſcience, in all things willing to live honeſtly.* Theſe two are inſeparable, and therefore, I may juſtly reckon the holy Inclination of the *Will*, to be requiſite to a *good Conſcience.*

Secondly, WHEN the Conſcience demeans it ſelf aright, as to the *Actions which are already done*, (as well as to *thoſe that are to be done*) it will deſerve the Denomination of *good*, it will be truly an *offenceleſs Conſcience.* As to the Actions then which are paſt, the Conſcience, which is right and good, doth firſt call them to Mind, ſets them in order before it, and takes a particular Survey of them. It lets no Action paſs, without bringing it to an Account, it examines how it hath been done; and trying it by the Teſt and Standard, knows whether it was good or not. If it finds upon Trial that it was good, *i. e.* agreeable to the divine Law, it approves of it; if it finds it otherwiſe, it diſallows and condemns it, as unagreeable to that Law. Here it may be ſaid, *Ye have one who accuſeth you*, even your Conſcience. There is one within you, who not only teacheth you, but rebukes and corrects you. *Socrates*, in his *Apology*, imputes it to his *Dæmon*, or *Genius*, that his vitious Inclinations were check'd, and that he ſaid and did Things, better than the vulgar Herd of Men; which ſome think he meant of his *Conſcience*, which is frequently call'd δαίμων, by *Plato.*

THIS that learned Father *Origen* meant by his *Pedagogue*; and *Seneca*, and others by their *Genius*, which dealt freely with them, and reproved and checked them, whenever they did amiſs. A good and upright Conſcience palliates no Sin, but impartially diſcovers it, and lays it open; and with that the State and Condition of the Perſon. Whereupon, the Man comes to have a perfect Knowledge of himſelf, and attains to a true Inſight into his preſent Condition: And this makes him watchful over his Ways for the Future, and gives a mighty Check to him in his Actions afterwards. But the *evil* and *deluded Conſcience* uſes to be partial and unfaithful in the Reflections it makes on a Man's paſt Actions; it is faint and backward in taking an Account of them. A ſuperficial Examination ſerves the turn, a falſe Judgment is made, Sin is connived at, and the Man hath no true Diſcovery made to him of his Ways; which cauſes him to perſiſt ſtill in his Sins, and to add every Day to the Number of them, and to increaſe his Guilt.

A PURE and rectified Conſcience doth alſo *reward* a Man for all the Good he hath done: It gives Peace and Comfort, it renders the Soul calm and ſerene, in the midſt of the greateſt Difficulties and Sufferings.

YET I muſt add, this is not abſolutely *neceſſary* in a good Conſcience; this is not *always* the Fruit of it. A good Conſcience may be troubled and diſquieted. *Integrity* and *Peace* are two Things, and are not always found together in a good Man: There may be Uprightneſs of Mind, and yet little Tranquillity; for that Conſcience, which as to the *main* is right and good, may ſometimes be drawn aſide, and prevailed with, to neglect its chief Offices, and to fail in its Duty, and ſo to give way to Sin and Vice, and thereby to diſhonour God, and grieve the Holy Spirit: Whence moſt juſtly may ariſe in the Mind, Grief and Trouble, Diſſatisfactions and Terrors, Anguiſh and Torment; as the deſerved Penalty of the Man's Careleſneſs and Neglect, of his daring to defile his Conſcience, and of his venturing to offend the Majeſty of Heaven. And if this Perſon be of a melancholick Temper, then theſe Troubles and Fears, this Grief, and Diſturbance of Mind, are ſo much the greater. But this Puniſhment, which is inflicted on a good Man, hath this happy Effect, that it makes him for the time to come, more cautious and vigilant; he will be afraid of diſpleaſing the Moſt High, and thereby of diſturbing and wounding his Conſcience, by complying with any evil Motions, and by conſenting to the Commiſſion of Sin; his Conſcience now is quick in apprehending its Duty, and diſcerning its Condition: It is lively and ſenſible, tender and ſoft, in Oppoſition to a *hard* and *benummed*, a *ſenſeleſs* and *ſeared Conſcience.*

THOUGH I know it may be queſtioned, Whether *this latter* can be call'd *Conſcience?* If a *doubting Conſcience* be an improper Way of ſpeaking, then ſurely this is much more ſo. Indeed, if the Mind be only *partly hardened*, and hath ſome little Senſe and Feeling remaining, then ſo far it is *Conſcience*. But if it be *wholly hardened*, and all over incruſtated, ſo that there is no Feeling, then though it be call'd *Conſcience*, it is not; as in Natural Philoſophy, that which is call'd a *Falling Star*, is no Star, ſo a *ſeared Conſcience*, (I mean when it is quite ſeared) is no Conſcience. Thus it is in the proper and ſtrict Way of Speaking, but in the more uſual and looſe Manner of expreſſing ourſelves, we may call it *Conſcience*; eſpecially having the Example of St. *Paul* for ſo doing, who tells us, that the Apoſtates of the latter Times ſhould *have their Conſcience ſeared with an hot Iron*, 1 Tim. iv. 2. That is, (as it is generally interpreted,) they ſhould become hard and inſenſible. The learned Dr. *Hammond* is of the Opinion, that by *a Conſcience ſeared with a hot Iron*, is not meant an *inſenſate* Conſcience, but (as the Greek Word alſo ſignifies,) a *mark'd*, *branded*, *ſtigmatized*, *i. e.* an infamous Conſcience; and *ſuch* it may be, tho' it be not void of *all Feeling*; the Perſons may be noted ſhameful, and ſcandalous, and ſo their Conſciences may accordingly be ſaid to be ſuch, although they be not utterly ſenſeleſs.

BUT I will offer *another* Signification of the Word, which will much confirm the Notion, I have before ſuggeſted. The original Word alludes not here, (as our *Annotator* thinks) to Slaves, who were wont to be ſtigmatized, but it refers to the Practice of *Chirurgeons*, who not only uſe *Burnings*, but *Cuttings*, not only *Cauſticks*, but *Abſciſſion*, and they oftentimes *go together*. Hence the Active Verb, καυτηριάζειν (as I can prove out of good Authors) is *cauterio abſcindere*, and ſo the Paſſive, καυτηριάζεσθαι is *cauterio abſcindi*, to be cut off by cauterizing, and more ſimply and abſolutely to be barely *cut off*, or *taken away*. So that I conceive the Meaning of κεκαυτηριασμένοι τὴν συνείδησιν is higher than our Tranſlation imports; for a *cauterized Conſcience*, is a Conſcience which having been corrupted, and as it were putrified, is *cut off*, and ſo, properly ſpeaking, is *no Conſcience*; which is the Thing I ſuggeſted.

THE Way to prevent this, is to keep the Conſcience pure and undefiled, to take Care that it be ſound and whole: And in order to this, to purge it from all Hypocriſy, and Diſſimulation, and to be careful that it be ſincere and upright; to keep it always in Action, to rouze and ſtir it up to the exerting its ſeveral Operations with the utmoſt Vigour and Activity; to perform its various Offices with Briskneſs, and Livelineſs: And laſtly, to be unreſerved and impartial, in the Diſcharge of its Duty; *i. e.* to leave nothing undone, which is required of it, or, in the Words of the Text, to be *void of Offence towards God, and towards Men.*

THIS is an Abbreviature of our whole Duty: Hereby is meant the keeping all the Commandments of the firſt and ſecond Table. A pure and upright Conſcience is *void of Offence towards God*, in that it is careful to diſcharge thoſe particular Duties, which relate more eſpecially to Him, as Faith, Hope, and Love, Fear, Honour and Worſhip; which are Acts of Religion that are immediately terminated in God. *Towards Men* likewiſe a good Conſcience is *without Offence*, in that it is faithful in directing us to thoſe peculiar Offices, which belong to our Brethren; as thoſe extenſive Duties of *Juſtice* and *Charity*, and doing in all Things as we would be done to. Particularly I might ſhew you how a true and right Conſcience influences on all the Relations, which Men have to one another: It enables Kings and Subjects, Magiſtrates and People, Maſters and Servants, Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, to behave themſelves in that Manner, which thoſe particular and diſtinct Relations require of them.

I MIGHT add likewiſe, a good Conſcience cauſes a Man to walk *without Offence*, that is, neither to give nor take Offence; he offends not others, and he indeavours that they ſhall not offend him. And this he doth, by looking narrowly to *himſelf* by continual exerciſing of Humility, Meekneſs, Patience, Moderation, Diligence, and Watchfulneſs: And ſo here by the by you may obſerve, that his *Duty to Himſelf* is included in that to Men.

AND all this is to be done (as the Text expreſſeth,) *always*, that is, not only *at all Times*, and in *every Seaſon* of our Lives, but (as the *Greek* Word likewiſe denotes) in *all Caſes*, in every Occurrence, and Emergency of our Lives;

in whatever Condition we are in, ſtill we are obliged to walk inoffenſively, to be blameleſs towards God and towards Men. This is the *good Conſcience*, or the *Conſcience void of Offence* which the Text commends to us.

III. In the next place I proceed to ſhew what it is for a Man *to exerciſe himſelf* to have ſuch a Conſcience. The Word, which the Apoſtle here uſes, ſignifies a *Preparing of himſelf* to that Work, it implies an Uſing all Diligence, Skill and Induſtry. His Mind and Body are both employ'd, for the * original Word denotes both. I am an *Aſcetick*, ſaith the Apoſtle, I uſe a ſevere *Exerciſe* in order to the getting and procuring, the keeping and preſerving a good Conſcience. Here then I muſt diſtinctly ſhew what this *Exerciſe* is, how we may attain to, have, and keep a good Conſcience. The Means which are to be uſed are firſt by way of *Conſideration*, Secondly by way of *Practice*. This *Exerciſe* conſiſts in theſe two *Principles* and *Actions*. By way of *Conſideration*.

* Ἀσκεῖν, meditari & exercere.

1. Urge this upon your Minds that God always ſees you, that he obſerves how you behave yourſelves. Whereſoever you are, and whatſoever you do, conſider that you are in his Sight. The inviſible God takes notice of your moſt ſecret and inviſible Actions: Yea, he knows the ſecret Thoughts, the inward Intentions and Deſigns which put you upon Action. Know this that *Man* is not be to your Judge, neither indeed can be; for he knows not your Hearts, and conſequently is unacquainted with that which is the Spring of all Evil in your Lives. God only is the Searcher of Hearts, and penetrates into the inmoſt Receſſes of the Soul. He ſees all we do in the dark, therefore think not to conceal any thing from him. *Seneca* and other grave Moraliſts wiſh'd Men to imagine ſome Philoſopher or any other reverend Perſon to be always in the Room with them, that the Senſe of ſuch a Preſence might influence upon them, and reſtrain them from acting amiſs. But do *you* remember that you are always in the Preſence of the All-ſeeing Majeſty of Heaven, and that he takes Notice of all your Actions. Have a Senſe of this, and it will over awe you in the greateſt Temptations; you will think, ſpeak, and act as having God's Eye always upon you; you will diſregard the Cenſures of Men, and wholly rely on the divine Approbation; you will labour in every thing you do to approve yourſelves to God.

2*dly*, Let us conſider how *many Obligations God hath laid upon you* to walk inoffenſively both towards him and towards all Men. Not to inſiſt upon this, that it is his Will and Pleaſure; he hath commanded you to do it, and that of itſelf is a ſufficient Ingagement, and we cannot with any reaſon reſiſt it: But further, let me offer to your Conſideration that we had our Being given us by him for this very purpoſe. As we are his *Creatures*, we are obliged to ſerve him, to do what he pleaſeth, to diſcharge the whole Duty which he requires of us. He is our *Maker*, and by that hath a Right of Dominion over us, and he may challenge Obedience of us. He is our Creator, and therefore our Lord: He beſtowing on us our Being, we are bound to exert and employ it in his Service: Eſpecially as we are *reaſonable Creatures*, and made after his Image: As we are Men, and have the Uſe of Underſtanding, and are indued with immortal Spirits, capable to know our Duty, thus we have an Obligation to live in all good Conſcience towards God and Men. For to this End we were indued with rational Souls, that we might converſe with God and be fit for divine Employment. Therefore conſider the Make of your Souls, which are framed to ſerve God, and to yield Obedience to his Laws. Remember what you were ſent into the World for: As St. *Bernard* uſed to ask himſelf, *What came I hither for?* So in the ſame manner ask yourſelves, to what End did God give you your Being? Wherefore are you placed in the World? Was it that you might live as you pleaſe, and that you might indulge yourſelves in your ſenſual and carnal Luſts? No certainly, the noble Frame of your Souls tells you another Thing. That acquaints you that your Buſineſs here is to know, love, and praiſe your Creator, and obey all his holy Laws and Commands. In brief, this lets you know that you are Creatures made to ſerve God, and do whatever he would have you do.

Besides, conſider not only your Relation to God as a Creator but as a Redeemer, not only as the Author of your Being, but of your Salvation and Happineſs: You are *redeemed by the precious Blood of Chriſt, as of a Lamb without Blemiſh and without Spot*, 1 Pet. i. 19. Think of this Price which was paid for the Expiation of your Sins; remember the Blood, the Wounds, the Sufferings, the Death of that Lamb of God: And then conſider that *you are not your own, be-*

ing bought with this Price; you are redeemed of the Lord, you *are deliver'd out of the Hand of your Enemies, that you might ſerve* your Redeemer *without Fear, in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs before him, all the Days of your Life*, Luke i. 74.

NEXT, Conſider what *Means* you have for this purpoſe. Upon you the true Light now ſhineth; you have thoſe bleſſed Diſcoveries made to you which God was pleas'd to hide from former Ages; unto you is made known the glorious Goſpel of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. Therefore not only as you are *Men* but as you are *Chriſtians*, as you are bleſſed with the Doctrine of the Meſſias, as you are honour'd with the Goſpel, the only Way of Life and Salvation; as you have vouchſafed unto you the Holy Spirit, whoſe Office it is to cleanſe and ſanctify, to chear and comfort you; and as you have the admirable and matchleſs Privilege of all the holy Ordinances and Inſtitutions of Chriſt, which he hath left with his Church to be the proper and ſucceſsful Means of Salvation, you are yet further ingaged to deny all Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent World, and to diſcharge a good Conſcience in all Things.

CONSIDER likewiſe how freely and plainly God hath declared his Willingneſs to ſave us, and to make us happy. He calls, he cries, he paſſionately invites us to accept of his Favour; he expoſtulates with us, he beſeeches, he intreats, he courts us not to damn ourſelves, but to partake of everlaſting Life and Glory.

LASTLY, Conſider God's daily Mercies to Sinners. As he gave them, their Being, ſo he preſerves and continues them in it: As he made them ſo he takes Care of them, and provides for them. He withdraws not his Favours notwithſtanding their repeated Provocations, he forbears to inflict thoſe grievous Puniſhments which they deſerve: And even when he puniſhes them for their Iniquity, yet in the midſt of Judgment he remembers Mercy: He gives abundant Proof that he is gracious and benign, ſlow to Anger, and ready to forgive. Theſe are the ſundry *Engagements* which God hath laid upon us to ſerve and obey him, and to live in all good Conſcience before him.

3. CONSIDER *the Obligations you have yourſelves laid upon you.* Remember your ſolemn Vow in Baptiſm, which, though it was made by a Proxy, you have ſince taken upon yourſelves, and thereby have ſacredly tied yourſelves to the diſcharging of your Duty: And you cannot poſſibly be diſengaged. In that holy Sacrament you were dedicated to God, and you cannot alienate yourſelves. Some of you have in the other Sacrament renewed the firſt ſolemn Vow and Covenant, and by that have laid a further Obligation on yourſelves. Moſt of you have purpoſed and reſolved, eſpecially in time of Sickneſs and imminent Danger, to forſake your Sins, and to amend your Lives. Many of you have repented of your evil Ways, and have promis'd to addict yourſelves to God's Service for the future. All of you make Profeſſion of Religion, and pray to God daily that his *Kingdom may come* and that *his Will may be done*, and you all pretend to believe the great Articles of the chriſtian Faith, and you ſay you hope for eternal Life and Happineſs. Let me tell you, theſe Vows and Covenants, theſe Purpoſes and Reſolutions, this Repentance and theſe Promiſes, this open Profeſſion, this daily Praying, this Rehearſing of your Belief, and theſe Hopes and Expectations are all of them ſo many *Obligations* to a holy and godly Life. And I pray ſeriouſly think of it, how you will be able to anſwer for your breaking of your ſolemn Vows, the violating all your earneſt Reſolves and Promiſes, the repenting of your Repentance, the walking contrary to your Profeſſion, the belying yourſelves in your Prayers, the contradicting of your Creed, the confuting of your Hopes, and in a Word, your ſolemn giving yourſelves the Lye.

4. CONSIDER the Goodneſs, Reaſonableneſs and Excellency of your Duty, weigh the Profitableneſs and Advantage of Religion; and on the contrary, the vaſt Evils and Miſchiefs which Sin carries along with it. If we love God we cannot but be pleas'd with what he hath commanded us, and with what is agreeable to his moſt pure and holy Nature. Goodneſs and Holineſs are lovely in themſelves, as God himſelf is; they are moſt ſuitable to the rectified Nature of Man, and they are moſt ſatisfactory to the rational Faculties which he is indued with: Beſides that they are every way profitable to him, and promote all his beſt Concerns and Intereſts. But there is no true Worth, no Pleaſure, no Profit in offending God, and in neglecting our Duty towards him, our Brethren, and ourſelves. The Pleaſure of Sin, which ſome talk of, is a mere Cheat and

Deluſion. It is grounded only on Fancy, it is a Dream, and a Shadow; or ſay there is ſome kind of Pleaſure in Vice, yet it is ſo poor and mean, and ſo low and ſordid, and with all ſo ſhort and momentary, that it can ſcarcely deſerve that Name. And ſay, that there is ſome *Difficulty* and *Pain* in ſome Actions of Holineſs, and in doing that which is good and righteous: Yet remember that thoſe ſoon paſs away, and the Pleaſure of doing good Actions remains: But on the contrary, when the Pleaſure of Sin is gone, there continues a conſtant Guilt which follows the doing of that which is evil and ſinful. Talk not then of the Pleaſure of Sin, nor repreſent any ſuch thing to thy Fancy, but conſider of the ſolid Pleaſure which follows our Victory over Sin. Vice is ever attended with Shame, and Fear, and Diſorder of Mind; but the Acts of Godlineſs are accompanied with Joy, and Peace, and Satisfaction of Soul. Think how precious a Treaſure theſe are, and hazard not the Loſs of them by declining your known Duty. Ponder the Excellency of Grace and Goodneſs, remember that an unreproveable Converſation, an innocent, pure and blameleſs Life are your greateſt Intereſt and Happineſs, as well as your indiſpenſible Duty.

5. MEDITATE on the Life of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, the holy Martyrs, Saints and Confeſſors, all good and holy Men, who exerciſed themſelves in this, to have a Conſcience free from all Offence. This was their main Study and Indeavour, this was the great Buſineſs of their Lives, they broke through all Temptations to accompliſh this; yea, they were content to undergo and ſuffer any thing rather then they would ſtain their Conſciences by ſinning againſt God. But eſpecially remember how our bleſſed Maſter behaved himſelf, ſet before you his exemplary Converſation, read how ſtrict and holy he was in all his Words and Actions, obſerve how inoffenſively he walk'd in the World: And this will inſpire you with pious Reſolves to imitate him according to your Meaſure and Capacity, and to take all the Care you can to live without Offence both towards God and towards Men.

6. CONSIDER how ſhort your Time is here, and how great Events ſhall be hereafter. It is appointed to all Men once to die: And as none is able to reverſe this Decree, ſo none can tell at what Time it will be executed. Death is uncertain, and oftentimes proves caſual and ſudden; nay, we cannot promiſe ourſelves that we ſhall live till the next Minute. This is a thing worth thy Thoughts. Conſider the Nature of thy State here, and how ſoon thou muſt leave this World. This will make thee haſten thy Repentance, and ſeriouſly mind thy Duty, and ſet about the great Work of thy Salvation in good Earneſt, that thou may'ſt not be ſurprized by *Death*, nor by the *Judgment* which comes after it.

WHICH is the next thing I propound to thy Meditations, *viz.* the final Events and Conſequences of Doomſday. Let the laſt Judgment be often in thy Thoughts, ſeriouſly repreſent to thy Mind that laſt Tribunal, and how that at that Day a Difference will be made between thoſe who indeavour'd to keep a good Conſcience, and thoſe who wholly neglected it. The *Former* ſhall receive the Rewards of a holy Life, and they ſhall find that *their Labour was not in vain in the Lord.* As they found a righteous and godly Life to be eaſy, ſweet and comfortable in its own Nature, ſo then they ſhall experience it to be much more ſuch by Addition of an infinite Recompence to it. The *Latter* ſhall receive the Wages of their ungodly Living, and ſhall be puniſh'd with eternal Vengeance from the Preſence of the Lord. Theſe ſhall find that though the Pleaſure of Sin was ſhort and fading, yet the Puniſhment of it is endleſs, and laſteth for ever. Conſider then what thou ſhalt be hereafter, either a Gueſt of *Paradiſe* or of *Hell.*

TO conclude theſe Conſiderations, let this ſink into thy Mind that if thou goeſt on in thy Sins, there will be one Day a ſad Reckoning, whether thou repenteſt of them or not: If thou repenteſt, it will coſt thee dear; if thou doſt not, yet much dearer; for if thou doſt not call thy ſelf to an Account here, God will hereafter, and then thy Caſe will be unſpeakably miſerable. If thou throughly conſidereſt of this when thou art tempted to Sin, thou wilt ſoon give a Repulſe to it, and thou wilt betake thyſelf to thy Duty, and diſcharge a good Conſcience whatever befals thee. Theſe are the things I requeſt you to think of every Day; for the Knowledge and Conſideration of them are of ſingular

Uſe in a Chriſtian's Life. They will, through the divine Bleſſing, reſtrain you from Vice, and effectually promote in you all godly Living. If you charge your ſelves with the ſerious Conſideration of theſe things, it will make you *conſcientious* in all your Ways, it will inable you to live without Offence towards God and Men.

2*dly*, BY *Way of Practice*, there are certain Means to be uſed to have and keep a good Conſcience. As ſome things are to be *thought of*, *conſider'd*, and *meditated upon*, (of which I have ſpoken) ſo ſome things are to be *done* and *practiſed*, which are theſe that follow,

1. TAKE Care to get your Underſtanding enlightned, to have a clear Knowledge of what you are to do. This is the firſt thing you are to be ſolicitous about: For the Conſcience being a knowing Principle, (as was ſaid before) it can never be good and right if there be a Defect and Failure here. To a good Conſcience there is neceſſarily required a good Underſtanding, a true Information, a clear Light. And you will be the more concern'd in what I ſay, if you conſider how great an Evil an erroneous Conſcience is: For here tho' a Man follows his Conſcience, yet he ſins, and that damnably. He thinks and is verily perſuaded that he doth God good Service, even whilſt he oppoſes the Truth, and perſecutes the Profeſſors of it, and is all the while ſerving the evil Spirit. Now, the Sin and Pravity of the Man who thus acts by an erroneous Conſcience lies in this, that he willfully refuſes to attain to a Knowledge of his Duty, and thereby voluntarily contracts Error. The Sin conſiſts not in the bare Fact, or following his Conſcience (for that he ought to do) but in his neglecting ſufficiently to inform himſelf. Wherefore we muſt of Neceſſity expel Ignorance and popular Folly, falſe Superſtitions, and imaginary Notions, unreaſonable Conceptions, wrong and groundleſs Apprehenſions; we muſt with great Diligence extirpate all Prejudice and Prepoſſeſſion of Mind; we muſt free our ſelves from Fear and Pride and Paſſion, for theſe are wont to blind the Mind: We muſt baniſh Self-love, Ambition and Covetouſneſs, which are other Impediments to the gaining of Knowledge and Truth, and we muſt indifferently and impartially entertain the Principles of Truth when they are offer'd to us. Act not in your Lives by obſcure Principles and mere Probabilities: Underſtand your Duty well, that you may diſcharge it with Freedom and Delight: Be ſatisfy'd concerning it, that you may not be dubious and fluctuating, that you may not be timorous and irreſolved, but that you may act without Scrupuloſity and Heſitancy. Obſerve *Pythagoras*'s Rule, * do nothing that you are ignorant of, do nothing which you are not ſatisfied is your Duty, and lawful for you to do: Becauſe the Apoſtle hath told us that *whatever is not of Faith* (i. e. of a firm Belief and Perſuaſion that the thing is lawful) *is Sin*, Rom. xiv. 2·. Whence you ſee how requiſite it is that the Mind of Man be enlightned; for though he doth what is required to be done by him, yet if he doth it not with Knowledge, he ſins. Therefore that you may attain to and ſecure a good Conſcience, be very ſtudious to baniſh Ignorance, and Deluſion, and even doubting. The firſt thing you are concern'd to do is to ſet up a fair Light to act by.

2. INDEAVOUR by all Means to keep your Conſciences from being *corrupted*, as well as from being *darkned*. Avoid whatever pollutes and debauches your Minds, as well as blinds them; that is, in plain Terms, free yourſelves not only of Ignorance, but of the Love of all manner of Vice; for this is the greateſt Corrupter of Conſcience. You muſt ſet yourſelves againſt thoſe Sins eſpecially which you are moſt inclined to, and which you find have the greateſt Prevalency upon you, thoſe Sins which are moſt pleaſurable and delightful, and are accompanied with the ſtrongeſt Allurements, thoſe Sins which give the greateſt Blow to Virtue, and make the deepeſt Gaſhes and Wounds in your Conſciences. You ought likewiſe to avoid the *Occaſions* of Sin, and to ſhun even the Path that leads to it: You muſt guard your outward Senſes that they may not be Inlets to Sin: You muſt reſiſt the firſt Motions and Offers of Vice, leſt it grow into a Habit and Cuſtom; nay, you muſt ſhun the very *Appearance of Evil*. You intend no Harm perhaps when you approach toward the Borders of ſome Sin, you abhor the main thing itſelf, but you think if you keep a due Diſtance from it, it is ſufficient. But let me tell you, it is not; for if you are deſirous to keep your Conſciences pure and blameleſs, you muſt not make any Approach to that which

* Πρῆσσε δὲ μηδὲν τῶν μὴ ἐπίϛασαι.

which is ſinful, you muſt not do any thing that is like it, for by that Means you will be tempted to do the thing itſelf. The ſhort is, that as you muſt not entertain any falſe Notions, ſo neither muſt you give Way to any evil Practices whatſoever. *Haſt thou ſinned? Do ſo no more, but ask Pardon for thy former Sins. Flee from Sin as from the Face of a Serpent*, Eccl. xxi. 1, 2. Immediately after the Commiſſion of any Sin, make a Stop, go no further, by no Means repeat thy Folly: But repent of what thou haſt done, retract all, and beware of Sin for the Time to come. Thus keep your Conſciences clear, let not Sin ſoil and pollute them: And then you will neither offend God nor Man by them.

3. That you may get and procure, and alſo keep and maintain a good Conſcience, beſure that you act not by deceitful *Rules*, but by thoſe which are right and ſtreight. Firſt, think not that *the Injunctions of the Magiſtrate*, and the Will of thoſe who are in Authority are the adequate Meaſure of your Actions. There are many Sins not forbidden by the publick Laws, as Lying in uſual Diſcourſe, Cenſoriouſneſs, Scoffing, Ingratitude, Pride, intemperate Eating, many Cheats and Circumventions, Idleneſs and miſpending of Time; none of theſe, I ſay, are forbidden and conſequently puniſhable by the Laws of the Land, and yet we are anſwerable to God for all theſe. Wherefore the publick Edicts and Conſtitutions of Magiſtrates are not the only Standard of our Duty. Beſides, ſometimes they command thoſe things which are directly ſinful, and then it is certain their Laws are not to be the Rules of our Actions. Nor ſecondly, is the *Example* of our Superiours or of any others to be reckon'd as a ſtanding Rule to us; for what they do may be in itſelf ſinful and vitious, as it frequently happens, and then their doing it doth not excuſe it, much leſs make it lawful. Nor thirdly, are we to be guided by *Cuſtom*; for this as well as the former is a deceitful Rule. The greateſt Sins are grown into *Uſe:* And it is not *Preſcription* that will legitimate them. Fourthly, there are others who rely on the *Opinion* and *Judgment* of thoſe who are in Repute among them: But they are oftentimes led into the groſſeſt Errors and Practices by this Means: For the Perſons on whoſe Judgments they reſt are no infallible Doctors, as appears from this, that they are ſeen ſometimes to change their Sentiments, and to take up others. Lay aſide then theſe vulgar and common Rules, which are the uſual Cauſes of an erroneous and depraved Conſcience; and conduct yourſelves, your Lives and Manners by ſuch Rules as theſe that follow.

Firſt, MANAGE your Life and Actions by the Dictates of *right Reaſon:* For a great Part of our Religion is the Law of Nature and Reaſon. This leads us to the main Duties of Sobriety towards ourſelves, of Juſtice and Charity towards our Neighbours, and of Reverence towards God. Theſe are interwoven with the very Nature of Man: They are agreeable to our Faculties: The Souls of Men have originally upon them the Impreſſions of theſe things. Our natural Light tells us that theſe are good and Praiſe-worthy, and ought to be done by us: Therefore this is a good Rule for us to follow.

Secondly, THE Word of God in the Writings of the old and new Teſtament is another and a higher Rule. To this *you will do well to take heed, as to* that ſupernatural *Light* which will direct and conduct you in thoſe things which are above the Law of Reaſon and Morality. This *more ſure Word of Prophecy*, this revealed Will of God, this divine Law from Heaven contain'd in the holy Scriptures is *able to make you wiſe unto Salvation*, 2 Tim. iii. 15. and to *inſtruct you in all Righteouſneſs*, v. 16. *that ye may be perfect and thoroughly furniſh'd unto all good Works*, v. 17. The grand Reaſon why Mens Conſciences are erroneous and corrupt is becauſe they are not conducted by this infallible and holy Guide. *They err* (both in Doctrine and Practice) *not knowing* (i. e. not attending to) *the Scriptures*, Mat. xxii. 29. as our Saviour told the *Saducees*. If you would then be freed from Error and Miſtakes, from Sin and Wickedneſs, and thereby poſſeſs blameleſs Conſciences, you muſt make theſe ſacred Writings, eſpecially thoſe of the new Teſtament, your conſtant Guide: *Let this Word of Chriſt dwell in you richly in all Wiſdom*, Col. iii. 16. See that you walk according to this Rule, and then you cannot do amiſs.

NEXT, *God's Providence* in the World, his remarkable Dealings with the Children of Men in Way both of Mercy and Judgment are very uſeful Directions to us in our Lives, and are ſerviceable to teach us what we are to do on ſeveral Occaſions. We may with great Advantage look back to the remarkable Occurrences which have been in the World in the ſeveral Ages of it, and thence learn a great Part of our preſent Duty. It may be uſeful alſo to obſerve the Tranſactions of the divine Providence in the Days we live in, and more particularly it may yield great Inſtruction to us to make Remarks on the moſt conſiderable Paſſages of our own Lives: The ſeveral Inſtances of God's paſt Diſpenſations to us may be happy Intimations to us of what we are to do for the future.

AGAIN, the unſpotted Example of all Purity, the *holy Life of Jeſus* is to be our Conduct. *I have given you an Example*, ſaith he, *that ye ſhould do as I have done to you*, John xiii. 15. His Life was deſign'd to be a Pattern of Holineſs, and therefore we ought conſtantly to regulate our Actions by this. *He left us an Example, that we ſhould follow his Steps*, 1 Pet. ii. 21. If we do ſo, we ſhall certainly walk in the right Path, and our Ways will be righteous and holy.

LIKEWISE the *Inſtructions and Examples of good Men*, ſo far as they follow their bleſſed Lord, are another Rule of our Lives. Theſe were intended for our Direction and Conduct, and we ought to fix our Eyes ſtedfaſtly upon them; and whenever we view the Actions of any good and holy Man, let us think ourſelves obliged to imitate them.

Laſtly, HUMANE Laws, ſo far as they are agreeable to the natural or divine one, are the Rule and Guide of our Conſciences. And indeed the Laws of good Princes and Magiſtrates are the Tranſcript of right Reaſon, they are the general Laws of Nature reduced and applied to particular Circumſtances; and in chriſtian Common-wealths they are generally conſonant to the written Laws of God. Theſe you may ſafely follow, nay theſe you muſt conform yourſelves to, they being deſign'd and appointed by God (by whom Kings reign and Princes decree Juſtice) to be the Rules of our Manners.

THUS you ſee what muſt be the Conduct of your Conſciences, and how you may *exerciſe yourſelves to have a good Conſcience.* For Conſcience is good or evil as it agrees or diſagrees with its *Rule.* Our Actions then muſt not only agree with the Perſuaſions of Conſcience, but thoſe Perſuaſions muſt be conformable to the Rule of Duty. A Man may act according to his Conſcience, and yet do ill, becauſe he acts contrary to his Rule: For it is the Law or Rule that warrants our Actions. Conſcience abuſed by falſe Perſuaſions, commonly call'd an *erroneous Conſcience*, obligeth not: The Man is only obliged to lay aſide the Error, but the Conſcience doth not directly oblige: And why? Becauſe it is not according to the Rule, it is not directed by the Law which Conſcience is to follow.

OR, you may call *Conſcience itſelf* a *Rule*, becauſe our Actions are to be ruled by it: And then you muſt diſtinguiſh thus, There is a *double Rule* of our Actions, *viz.* the principal one, which is the Law of God whether natural or revealed, together with the other things before mentioned: And the ſecondary one is Conſcience, which though it be a Rule, yet is directed by the other primary Rule. For the Conſcience is not its own Rule, but is govern'd and guided by Rules which God hath preſcribed it, and then only it acts aright when it agrees with theſe. Let us not therefore be deluded by bare Pretences of Conſcience, let not this be our Refuge to fly to, thinking that this can ſecure us whatever we do. Let us not alledge Conſcience unleſs it be grounded either upon Scripture or Reaſon, or thoſe other things which are conſonant to theſe. Know this that Men are frequently deceiv'd by liſtning to their Conſciences without trying them by theſe Rules. Therefore you are greatly concern'd to manage yourſelf aright in this Matter. Remember to look to your *Rule:* Conſcience muſt always keep cloſe to this, or elſe it will not prove an Offenceleſs Conſcience.

4. ALWAYS *maintain a quick Senſe of your Condition and of your Duty*; above all things *beware of a ſeared Conſcience.* Or, as that Text imports, take heed leſt you abandon and loſe your Conſciences by Hardneſs of Heart. See that you be not of the Number of thoſe who the Apoſtle foretold ſhould be in the laſt Days, who had their Conſciences cauteriz'd and cut off. They had caſt away their Conſciences by benumming and hardning them. To prevent this,

Firſt, ACCUSTOM not yourſelves to Sin: For the Inſenſibleneſs is generally the Fruit, and indeed the natural Effect of Mens continuing a long Time in their Sins, and thereby contracting a Habit of Vice. Perſiſt not then in your evil Ways, forthwith take your leave of them, otherwiſe you will by continual Uſe have a perverſe and depraved Judgment of things, and at length no Judgment and Senſe at all.

Secondly, BE not guilty of notorious, crying and very ſcandalous Sins, for theſe will in an extraordinary Manner hurt the Conſcience, and put out the Eye of the Soul, and even ſtrike it dead. Where theſe are indulged, the Senſe of Sin and Guilt vaniſhes, and the Mind grows callous and obdurate ever afterwards. Therefore, whatever you do, ſhun theſe great Enormities which lay waſte the Conſcience.

Thirdly, STOP not the Mouth of Conſcience, uſe not Ways to ſtifle and ſilence it, but ſuffer it to ſpeak out, and freely diſcover itſelf. The common Practice of Sinners is contrary to this; they either by the Noiſe of Company, or by Exceſs of Pleaſures, or by the Tumult of worldly Buſineſs, or ſome other Way labour to divert, and if it be poſſible to drown the Voice of their Conſciences, that they may not tell them ſad Stories of their Lives, and impartially acquaint them with their wretched Condition. With *Saul* they call for the Harp to play them away: With *Belſhazzar* they call for full Bowls to quaff them away: With *Herod* they call for a Damſel to dance away their diſtracted Thoughts. Mirth and Wine, Sleep and Diverſion ſilence their Trouble for awhile; theſe flatter their Diſeaſe, but do not cure it; theſe Anodynes adjourn the preſent Pain, theſe Narcoticks ſtupify, and ſo mitigate the Grief; but the Diſeaſe will rage the worſe afterwards, ſeeing the Cauſe of the Diſtemper ſtill remains; the Wound will bleed afreſh, and nothing will be able to ſtop it. It is a vain Attempt to ſtifle Conſcience. It is as if a Man being arreſted ſhould feaſt the Sergeant and make him drunk, and lay him aſleep, and ſo eſcape; not conſidering that he is liable to be apprehended again, and by the ſame Hand which will, even out of Revenge for what was done before, uſe him very ſeverely and roughly, and hurry him forthwith to Priſon, and ſee him laid up faſt there. Know then that Conſcience will do its Office at one Time or other; if not now, yet before you leave the World, even when you are going out of it. A Death-bed will repreſent things to you as indeed they are, when neither Drink, nor Pleaſure, nor Buſineſs, nor any thing elſe will be a ſeaſonable diverting of your troubled Minds.

Fourthly, USE the proper Means for the awakening of your Conſciences, and begetting in them a quick and lively Apprehenſion concerning your Doings, and concerning your State both here and hereafter. Pray without ceaſing, confer and diſcourſe with thoſe who have a great Senſe of Religion and Piety, read and hear the Word of God. Let the Deſign of your attending on the Preaching of the Goſpel be this, to be taught how you may be helped to live conſcientiouſly. And to this Purpoſe love to have your Conſciences rifled, and your Sins laid open: Prize thoſe Sermons which reach your Hearts, and regulate your Lives, and bring you to the Senſe and Practice of your Duty. Think what a miſerable Thing it is to be deliver'd over to a reprobate Mind, that is, not to ſee and diſcern what is good, but to do the contrary. This is both a Sin and a Puniſhment; a *Sin*, becauſe theſe Perſons do ſtill wilfully perſiſt in their Folly; a *Puniſhment*, becauſe God inflicts this as the Penalty of their own former hardning their Hearts. The juſt Wrath and Judgment of God ſends this upon them: They heretofore abuſed their Reaſon and Judgment, and now moſt deſervedly theſe are taken away from them.

5. TO procure a good Conſcience, and to keep it ſoft and ſenſible, often ſearch into it, and examine your Life and Actions. Tho' we were not told by an infallible Author, yet our own Experience is able to furniſh us with this Truth, that *the Heart is deceitful above all things*, it daily cheats and deludes us, and therefore it is our Concern to watch it very carefully, and to prevent our being continually deceiv'd by it. Let us narrowly obſerve its Motions, be acquainted with its Inclinations, take Notice of all its Sallies; and then being no Strangers here, we ſhall be the better able to ſearch into our *Actions*, which ſpring from thence. Now, our Actions admit of a double Examination: Firſt,

before we ſet about them, we muſt enquire into the Nature of them, and examine what the Conſequences of them are like to be. In every thing that we undertake we ought to aſk ourſelves thus, (as even a * *Pagan* hath taught us) Shall we repent of this when it is done? Is this ſuch an Action as we ſhall find Content and Comfort in afterwards? Shall we not be troubled that we did it? Will not our Conſciences check us for it? Thus before we act, we ought to examine ourſelves, that we may not venture on any thing raſhly, and unreſolved of the Lawfulneſs of it. And *after* the Action is over, we muſt likewiſe enquire into it, taking an Account of ourſelves how it was done, and in what Manner. This was the Advice of an antient † *Heathen* Philoſopher, who bid his Scholars, before they ſlept, examine the Actions of the Day paſt, putting theſe Queſtions to themſelves, *Wherein have I tranſgreſs'd? What have I done? What have I omitted that was my Duty to do?* Thus they were to catechiſe themſelves. And *chriſtian* Men ſhould not diſdain to follow this Example, if they be deſirous to keep their Conſciences pure and upright: They muſt make Inquiry into their Lives, they muſt *take down their Sack*, and ſee if the *Cup* be there: They muſt narrowly ſearch into their Failings and Miſcarriages, and not be unwilling to have them diſcover'd. Every Man muſt interrogate himſelf as the Apoſtles did, *Is it I? Is it I?* He muſt be conſtantly ſuſpicious of himſelf, and of his Actions, and (as the Effect of that) he muſt often look into his Heart and Ways, and ſtudy his own Conſcience well.

6. WOULDST thou have a good Conſcience? Then be ſure that thou *never willingly acteſt againſt it.* As a Man may ſin by following the Dictate of his erroneous Conſcience contrary to the Laws of God, or by following the Laws of God contrary to his Conſcience; ſo likewiſe it is certain, that he may ſin (and moſt Men do ſo) by breaking the Law of God, contrary to the poſitive Dictates of his Conſcience. Have a ſpecial Care that you be not guilty of this, take heed of known Sins, omit not known Duties. God hath ſet up a Candle in your Breaſts: As you muſt not blow it out, ſo you muſt not ſin againſt this Light. The contrary Behaviour of Men is too frequent in the World: They plainly ſee what they are to do, the inward Instructor in their Souls tells them how they are to act, but notwithſtanding this, they either omit their Duty, or act quite counter to it. Hence it is that their Minds are ſo defiled, and that their Conſciences are even laid waſte. That yours may not be ſo, never act againſt your Light and Knowledge, let not theſe condemn you in any Thing, but let all your Actions be anſwerable to them. You have entertain'd good Principles and Perſuaſions: O do not act in Oppoſition to them. In a Word, let nothing in the World prevail with you, to practiſe any Thing contrary to the clear Convictions of your Conſciences.

Laſtly, TO heap up many Things together, if you would have and keep, and live in all good Conſcience, then be always begging the Aſſiſtance of Heaven, without which you can neither undertake nor perform any good Thing. Beſeech God to work in you both *to will and to do of his good Pleaſure, to ſanctify your whole Spirit, Soul and Body, and to preſerve you blameleſs to the Coming of the Lord Jeſus.* Study every Day the World's Vanity, and *let your Moderation be known unto all Men.* Deny yourſelves in your Deſires and Inclinations, that they may not unawares betray you to what is ſinful and unlawful. Labour to underſtand the real Worth, and tranſcendent Excellency of the Things of God and Heaven, and ſeek theſe in the firſt Place. Lay not the great Streſs of Religion in ritual Circumſtances, and in Matters of an indifferent Nature; but let it be ſeen through your whole Life, that Religion is a ſubſtantial Thing, and that it conſiſts chiefly in real Acts of Righteouſneſs and Godlineſs, and thoſe Things that have an abſolute and inſeparable Goodneſs in them. Carefully embrace all Opportunities of doing Good, and let every one you converſe with be the better for you ſome way or other. With a ſimple, honeſt and ſincere Heart aim at God's Glory in all that ye do, and ſuffer no baſe and ſiniſter Ends to corrupt your beſt Actions. Grow in Grace, and abound in all good Works, and perſevere in them to the End of your Lives. Whenever you have fail'd in your Duty, and you find your Conſciences ſtain'd with guilt, forthwith cleanſe and purge them by humble Confeſſion, by hearty Sorrow and Remorſe, by a perfect Hatred of your Sins, and a ſincere Renouncing of them; but eſpecially by repair-

* *Antonin. de vitâ ſua.*

† *Pythag.* χρύσ. ἔπη.

repairing unto *Jeſus the Mediator of the new Covenant, and to the Blood of Sprinkling, that ſpeaketh better Things than that of Abel*, i. e. than the bloody Sacrifice which was offer'd by *Abel*, and which was ſo acceptable to God. Waſh and cleanſe your polluted Souls in the precious Blood of this Lamb of God: For his Sake implore the Pardon and Forgiveneſs of your Sins, earneſtly beg to be juſtified by his meritorious Righteouſneſs, and to be ſanctified and renew'd by his holy Spirit, that you may walk before God in all well-pleaſing.

THESE are the Means to be made uſe for attaining and keeping a good Conſcience: And they may alſo more generally be look'd upon as *Directions* and *Helps* to *live well.* See then, that you direct yourſelves, by theſe *Conſiderations* and *Rules*. In every Action look at theſe, and ſcan all your Doings by them. The *Roman* Church hath * many *Directors* of Conſcience (tho' by the by, if ſhe were *infallible* after that manner that ſhe boaſts of, there would be no need of theſe Directors: But this is not the firſt Thing, wherein it may be obſerv'd that ſhe contradicts herſelf, and acts contrary to her own Conceſſions): And we have † ſome Divines that have travell'd in that Way, to direct Conſciences in *particular Caſes:* Theſe may be conſulted by Perſons, who have Skill and Leiſure to ſcan their caſuiſtical Writings. My Buſineſs was only to inſiſt upon ſome more general Heads, which are of conſtant uſe in the conducting of our Lives, and by theſe you may partly judge and determine of Particulars. If you ſeriouſly and impartially apply yourſelves to the ſeveral Directions, after you have ſtudied the Nature and Offices of Conſcience, I hope you will find, that they are of good Uſe in your Lives, and that they will ſucceſsfully guide you in the main Things of your chriſtian Duty.

WHAT remains now, but that I remit you to your own Conſciences for Inſtruction and Direction? You have this great and complicate Faculty given you by God: Conſtantly make uſe of it, that is, conſult it, and follow its Directions. Though thou haſt never ſo many Counſellors, yet do not forſake the Counſel of thy own Soul, ſay the *Hebrew Doctors*, in a Proverbial way. It was alſo admirable Advice which *Tully* gave his Friend, || Hold Diſcourſe with thyſelf, be thy own Counſellor, hearken to thyſelf, follow the Inſtruction of thy own Mind, none can better adviſe thee than thyſelf: The ſame I ſay to you, converſe with yourſelves, conſult your own Breaſts, liſten to the Inſtructions and Admonitions, obſerve the Reproofs and Checks of your own Minds, and act accordingly. † It muſt be your Care thro' your whole Life, that you do not recede from your Conſcience ſo much as a Nail's breadth, ſaith the foreſaid excellent Moraliſt. You muſt exactly live according to its Dictates, and not vary in the leaſt from its Commands. Which I will preſs upon you by theſe two Motives.

1. *GOD placed Conſcience in us on purpoſe* that we ſhould conſult it, and act by it: Therefore we muſt needs be inexcuſable, if we ſin againſt it. This Light, which ſhines within us, was given to this End, that we might direct our Steps by it. It was made to admoniſh us of the inward Turpitude of Sin, and to reſtrain us from it: It was to be a conſtant Curb and Check to us, and to pull us back from the Commiſſion of Sin. Wherever we go, we carry this Inmate, this Gueſt along with us; when we are in Private, and think we are alone, this Companion, this Familiar is with us, this Overſeer, this Obſerver of what we do, this Watch, this Guard is never from us. Men bluſh to act before *others*, that which is unſeemly: But do thou uſe thyſelf to be aſhamed to act before *thyſelf* any Thing that is ſo. Which is the Meaning of *Pythagoras*'s excellent Counſel, *Reverence thy ſelf*. That one *golden Sentence* is enough to give the Denomination to thoſe *Verſes* of his, which are call'd ſo. Of all Perſons fear thy ſelf moſt, ſtand in Awe of thy own Conſcience, be afraid to do any Thing againſt thy own Mind, and ſo thou wilt never undertake any Thing amiſs. And when thou haſt done any Thing, ſtill have Recourſe to this Witneſs and Overſeer, and he will faithfully inform thee, whether thou haſt done well or ill, and he will give thee a true Account of thy ſpiritual State. And let me deſire you to remember this, that if you make not uſe of this Admonitor, this Witneſs of God in your own Breaſts, you will be ſelf-condemned Perſons; you will be left without all Excuſe,

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* *Sotus or a Soto, Azorius, Aragon, Saa, Navar, Suarez, Sayr, Greg. de Valentia, Bannes, Vaſquez, Lopez.*

† *Perkins, Ameſius, Hall, Sanderſon, Hammond, Taylor, Baxter.*

|| *Tecum loquere, te adhibe in conſilium, te audi, tibi obtempera. Nemo eſt qui ſapientius tibi ſuadere poſſit te ipſo.* Famil. *Epiſt. l.* 2. *Ep.* 7.

† *Curandum, idque in omni vita quemque a recta conſcientia tranſverſum unguem non oportere diſcedere.* Cic. ad Attic. *Ep. l.* 13. *Ep.* 20.

if you act contrary to the Inſtructions and Checks of this inward Teacher and Reprover, he being placed by God in your Souls for this Intent, that you might be kept from ſinning by it.

2. KNOW this, that [*] as thou treateſt thy Conſcience, ſo that will treat thee. If thou uſeſt it well, that is, if thou duly conſulteſt it, and ſincerely followeſt its Dictates, it will prove a kind Friend and Comforter, and thou wilt find it to be ſuch even [†] in the greateſt Troubles and Afflictions that befal thee. Yea, this will be thy Solace and Support at Death; for when thou canſt ſay with the Apoſtle, *I have lived in all good Conſcience*, thou mayſt depart in Peace, thou may'ſt expire with Joy and Gladneſs. But then let it be remembred on the other hand, that Conſcience is a very grievous Enemy, if offended; it haunts us continually at Home and Abroad, in Private and in Company, and never lets us be quiet. Eſpecially in time of Danger and Sickneſs, and at the Approach of Death Conſcience will be opening its Mouth, and crying out, though it had been ſilent all along before: And if we do not heartily repent of our Sins before we go hence, it will at the Day of Judgment lift up its Voice yet lowder, and teſtify to the World our ſecret Iniquities, our dark and cloſet Crimes; and it is this which will be moſt clamorous afterwards, when we deſcend into the Regions of the Damned, where it will become our greateſt Pain and Torment. You are concerned then to look well to your Conſciences, for accordingly as you treat them, they will prove either your beſt Friends, or your worſt Enemies. Whatever you do then, violate not your Conſciences: In all your Actions which relate to God or Men, let it be your chief Care to keep theſe unſpotted and blameleſs. Value a good Conſcience above all Things: Let no Conſideration or Temptation whatſoever prevail with you to ſlight and diſregard, to abuſe or debauch your Conſciences. Think thus with yourſelves, this World will have an End, eſpecially with me it will ſoon have its Period, I muſt die and appear before the great Tribunal, and then the favour of God, and the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience will be the only Things which will ſtand me in any ſtead. The Profits and Pleaſures, or Honours that I had in this World will do me no Good, yea, they will rather do me a great deal of Harm; for they were the Occaſions and Invitations to many Sins, for which I muſt now anſwer to the impartial Judge of all the World. Therefore be not eager in your Perſuit after worldly Gain, ſenſual Delights, and the Approbation and Applauſe of Men, but make it your main Deſign and Buſineſs to pleaſe God, and to diſcharge a good Conſcience. Be willing to live peaceably with all Men, but let it be your chief Study and Endeavour to be at Peace with God and your own Minds, and then all the Bleſſings of this Life, and of another ſhall attend you.

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[*] *Sacer intra nos ſpiritus ſedet, malorum bonorumque noſtrorum obſervator & cuſtos. Hic prout à nobis tractatus eſt, ita nos ipſe tractat.* Senec. Epiſt. 41.

[†] *Conſcientia rectæ voluntatis maxima conſolatio eſt rerum incommodarum.* Cic. Famil. *Epiſt. l.* 6.

Continual ACTION
AND
EMPLOYMENT
Are requir'd in the
LIFE
OF A
CHRISTIAN.

ECCLES. ix. 10.

Whatſoever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with thy Might: For there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wiſdom in the Grave whither thou goeſt.

IT is not enough that our Duty, with Reference to Religion, be barely propounded to us, but it is requiſite that the Reaſons of it ſhould be laid before us, and urged upon us. For our Religion is a reaſonable Service, and therefore it is proper to preſs and inculcate it by rational Arguments and Motives. Accordingly the Royal Preacher here doth not only ſet before us our great and main Concern, and exhorts us to be mindful of it and to diſcharge it with our utmoſt Care, *Whatſoever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with thy Might*, but he alſo aſſigns the Ground and Reaſon of this Exhortation, and by a moſt forcible and prevailing Motive excites us to the Practice of what he had propounded, *For there is no Work nor Device, nor Knowledge*, &c.

WHEREFORE I will diſtinctly handle theſe two general Parts of the Text, with the more particular ones contain'd under them. The firſt and moſt obvious Thing which we are to take notice of in theſe Words is this, that we muſt be *upon Action*, we muſt be *employ'd*. Whilſt we reſide in this World, we have always ſomething to *do in it*. That is manifeſt from the Words of the Text, *What thy Hand findeth to do, do it*. This is evident from that Parable of our Saviour, *Luke* xix. 21. *&c.* where we read that *every Servant* had *one* or *more Talents* committed to him to trade with and improve. God is our great and univerſal Maſter, and hath ſet every one of us ſome Work, he hath entruſted us with ſome Talent or other, and he expects that we ſhould faithfully employ it. He hath diſtributed amongſt the Sons of Men *bodily* Bleſſings, as a healthful Conſtitution, Strength, Vigour and Activity of Limbs; Symmetry and Beauty of the ſeveral Parts; and a long Life, and that lengthned out as 'twere yet further by a happy Progeny. Beſides theſe there are other Talents liberally communicated to the Race of Mankind, as Wealth, Credit, Authority, and a Confluence of all things that may render them proſperous in the World.

THE *Souls* of Men are bleſſed alſo with Gifts proper to their Nature, as a clear Underſtanding, a retentive Memory, a pregnant Fancy, a well-diſpos'd Will, governable Paſſions; and as the Conſequences of theſe, Skill in Arts, Sciences, Languages, Trades, Profeſſions, Dexterity to manage Affairs, Prudence to direct their Actions, Sagacity and Conduct in the ſeveral Occurrences of Life. To theſe we muſt add things of an higher Nature, as a bleſſed Comforter, all the Helps and Means of a virtuous Life, the gracious Methods of divine Providence, the Tenders of Life and Happineſs through the Blood of the Meſſias, all the Opportunities of Grace, and the various Inſtances of unparallel'd Love towards us in order to our Salvation.

THESE are the *Talents* which the kind Hand of Heaven hath ſcatter'd among Men here below; but not with a Licenſe to rap them up in a Napkin or hide them in the Ground, *i. e.* to render them wholly uſeleſs; but that they may traffick with them, according to that ſtrict Charge given them, *Occupy till I come*; manage and imploy them to my Glory, that when I come to take an Account of you, it may be to your Joy and Comfort in that Day. What are the richeſt Treaſures of Gold as long as they lie in the Mines, and are hid under the Earth? They are altogether uſeleſs. And ſuch are the choiceſt Talents conferr'd upon you, if you employ them not. They are not advantageous to yourſelves or others: They redound not to the Honour of your great Lord and Donor. But know this, that God beſtow'd his Gifts upon you with this Proviſo that you ſhould improve them by diligent Labour and Induſtry. Have a Senſe then of what is required of you: Think you hear our Saviour's Words to his Apoſtles a little before his Paſſion, *Ariſe, let us go hence.* Work calls for us: We muſt do or ſuffer; we muſt not ſit ſtill, but look out for Employment. We were deſign'd for Buſineſs, when we were ſent into the World; therefore *why ſtand ye idle in this Market-place*, in this Place of Traffick, in this Scene of Labour and Diſpatch? *What your Hand findeth to do, do it.*

Secondly, THE *Reſtriction*, together with the *Univerſality* of this Injunction of the wiſe Man, is obſervable. *Whatſoever* thy Hand findeth, ſaith he. *All, every thing* (for that is the true rendring of the *Hebrew* Word here) *whatſoever* it is that we know to be our Concern and Duty, we muſt with great Earneſtneſs proſecute. *Nothing* muſt be omitted, nothing muſt be neglected that we are convinced ought to be done by us. But with the *Univerſality* there is joined a *Reſtriction:* We are not raſhly to venture upon every Thing: We muſt act with Choice and Diſcrimination. Whatſoever *our Hand findeth do*, that which, after a diligent Search and conſcientious Enquiry into the Nature and Limits of our Duty, we find to be *really good and Praiſe-worthy, and our indiſpenſible Concern*, that which we find to be *fitteſt* and *moſt proper to be done by us*, in our preſent Circumſtances, that let us undertake with great Seriouſneſs and Compoſedneſs of Mind and perſue with our utmoſt Intention and Zeal.

Firſt THEN, We are not only to be doing, to be employ'd, but we muſt take care that the Work we ſet about be really *good* and *Praiſe-worthy*, and ſuch as is *our indiſpenſible Concern.* We ſee 'tis a buſy World, and Men are full of Employment. They may not be ſaid to *bury* their Talents, but they *abuſe* them, they miſpend them, they embezzle them. They are not idle, but they are active in doing that which is amiſs which is far worſe. Many of them are taken up with needleſs and unprofitable Affairs, about ſuch Matters as are trifling and impertinent, and ſo their Labour is loſt: You may call it a laborious Idleneſs, a pragmatical Sloth, a ſuperfluous Diligence, an unprofitable *Anxiety.* Theſe Men are ſome of *Domitian*'s Play-fellows, buſying themſelves with Flies; they affect little and unſuitable Employments, ſuch as are unworthy of themſelves and their reaſonable Nature. But (which is yet *more* deplorable to utter) the greateſt Numbers of Men buſy themſelves about thoſe things which are directly vitious, diſhoneſt and impious, and ſpend their Days in this Employment. Are there not many Prodigals that miſpend their Subſtance, not only not doing Good, but doing much Miſchief with what they receiv'd from the Hands of God? Are there not many that lay out their Eſtates and Revenues on their Luſts and the fulfilling of them? That make their Wealth and Abundance (which are the proper Materials of Charity and Benevolence) adminiſter to Luxury and Pride, and a Contempt of their poor Neighbours? Are there not many that employ their Health, their Strength, their Time, in Intemperance and Lewdneſs, Riot and notorious Acts of Prophaneneſs and Debauchery? Are there not many that make the Endowments of their Minds ſubſervient to the worſt Ends, *viz.* Reaſoning againſt Religion and the Author of their Beings, and pleading for the fouleſt Vices? Are there not many that hold the Truth in Unrighteouſneſs, and turn the Grace of God and all his Gifts into Wantonneſs and Licentiouſneſs: And that uſe their Skill, their Parts, their Wit in contriving new Ways of being vitious?

BUT *you* are to be of another Rank of Men, *viz.* thoſe that act neither *unprofitably* nor *wickedly*. Your Thoughts and Endeavours muſt be employ'd about Things that are good and laudable in themſelves, and about ſuch things as are neceſſary and of the greateſt Moment, the great Things of another World, the Favour of God, and an Intereſt in the Holy Jeſus. Let us not ſpend our Money for that which is not Bread, and our Labour for that which ſatisfieth not. Let us conſider how far better our Souls are then our Bodies, and conſequently how reaſonable it is to prefer the Concerns of the former to thoſe of the latter. Let us ſeriouſly think how great a Work a Chriſtian hath to do, no leſs than believing all that God hath reveal'd, and doing all that he hath commanded. There is no Part of a Man's Life wherein he is not oblig'd to ſerve God: And this he muſt do in all his Affairs, whether worldly or ſpiritual, whether ſecular or religious. He muſt ſtudy to pleaſe his great Maſter, and not conform himſelf to the Wills and Humours of vain Men. He muſt think, ſpeak, and act for God, and make this his chief and only Buſineſs. Yea, this muſt be the Task of his whole Life, and he cannot poſſibly be excuſed from attending it. Thus far in general. But

Secondly, WE are to be principally employ'd about that which is our more *proper* and *peculiar Buſineſs* in reſpect of the preſent Circumſtances we are in. Which I will explain to you in theſe three particulars.

I. LOOK back upon your paſt Lives, and chiefly repent of thoſe Sins which you have *heretofore moſt indulged yourſelves in*; and practiſe thoſe Virtues and Graces which you know you have been moſt defective in. This is your *proper* Work, and therefore apply yourſelves to it in good Earneſt. Know aſſuredly that thoſe, who have heartily repented of their paſt Miſcarriages, will diſcover it to the World by walking more circumſpectly in the remaining Part of their Lives; but more eſpecially they will remember to be religious and holy in Reference to thoſe things in which formerly they tranſgreſs'd: They will mind thoſe Duties chiefly which they heretofore neglected. They will ſhun all Sins, but thoſe more eminently which they were moſt addicted to in their State of Impenitence, which then they had the greateſt Kindneſs for, and towards which their Hearts were moſt vehemently enclined. As a mindful Traveller will be careful to ſhun every wrong Road, but he takes ſpecial heed that he ſtrays not into that By-way, that falſe Path wherein formerly he had wandred: So the true Convert hath a general and catholick Diſlike of every Sin, but he more ſignally reſolves and fortifies himſelf againſt that wherewith heretofore he offended God moſt. A Man that is recover'd of a Surfeit, ſuppoſing that he acts rationally and wiſely, uſes great Care and Caution in his Diet in general, but more particularly he is afraid of indulging himſelf in that Sort of Food which caus'd his Diſtemper. Thus a ſincere Penitent reforms his whole Life, but eſpecially abſtains from that or thoſe Vices, which lay ſo heavy on his Conſcience before, and ſo grievouſly debauch'd and corrupted his Soul, and diſturb'd the hale Temper of it. So *Ephraim* cried out in a pious Diſdain and Abhorrence, *What have I to do with Idols?* Hoſ. xiv. 8. *Idolatry* had been their ſpecial Crime, their more ſignal Enormity, and therefore now they are particularly reſolved againſt it: And by diſcarding and renouncing of that they will demonſtrate that their Repentance and Reformation are true. Go you and do the ſame, reflect upon your paſt Actions, rifle your Lives, and ſee what hath been the Folly and Vice you have moſt given Way to, and in a particular Manner check yourſelves for that, and guard yourſelves for the future more ſtrongly againſt it: Yea, addict yourſelves moſt concernedly to the oppoſite Virtues, and let theſe have the greateſt Aſcendent in your Lives and Practices. This I commend to you as your *proper Work*.

II. THERE are Duties proper to us in *Reſpect of the particular Gifts and Talents which are beſtow'd upon us*, and we muſt be very careful to diſcharge theſe. * *Unto every one of us is given Grace according to the Meaſure of the Gift of Chriſt*. Every Perſon hath his peculiar Gift and Endowment according as his great Donor and Benefactor hath appointed, according to the Meaſure and Proportion allotted him. Now according to this Meaſure we are to act, *i. e.* we are to be chiefly concern'd in employing that particular Gift and Talent which Heaven hath freely beſtow'd upon us. † *As every Man hath receiv'd the Gift, ſo let him miniſter*, ſaith another Apoſtle: Intimating that there is no Man but hath ſome Donative or other which makes him ſerviceable to the World: And beſides, there is a great Variety and Diverſity of Gifts. Wherefore every one is obliged to act according to this multiplicity of Gifts; he is to obſerve what peculiar Endowment (above others) God hath entruſted him with, and to think himſelf concern'd to improve that. He that is a Man of Parts and great Accompliſhments muſt *proportionably* be ſerviceable to the Church or State where he is placed. A Man of Wealth and Eſtate muſt do Good in the World according to the Meaſure of earthly Riches wherein he excels others. Liberality or Munificence is peculiar to ſuch a Perſon, for none but rich and great Men are capable of exerting this Virtue. And ſo as to any other Talents and Gratuities beſtow'd upon the Sons of Men, their Serviceableneſs muſt be anſwerable to them: Yea, becauſe the Meaneſt are bleſſed with ſome Gift of Body or Mind, they muſt remember they are obliged to be uſeful and profitable in the Exerciſe of it. Every Ship is not ſo big as the *Sovereign*, or *Britannia*, but yet they have all their proper Uſefulneſs, yea *that* which is denied to thoſe larger ones. God hath ſo wiſely order'd the World that many Perſons in it, of a leſſer and meaner Figure, are as ſerviceable in their Kind as thoſe of a greater Magnitude, thoſe of the firſt Rate.

* Eph. iv. 7.

† 1 Pet. iv. 10.

III. THERE are ſome Duties which we are more eſpecially concerned in by Reaſon of our *Callings* and *Stations*, our *particular Offices* and *Relations*: There are diſtinct Orders and Ranks of Men in the World, and accordingly their *Actions* are to be diſtinct. Thoſe that are Superiors to others, thoſe that are *Governors* and *Magiſtrates*, and placed at the Helm, have a Task to mind that is different from that of other Men, who are placed below them and are ſubject to them. *Their* proper Work is to underſtand the Laws and Conſtitutions of the Government, to maintain Juſtice, and keep Men within the Bounds of their Duty. They are to exceed others as much in Goodneſs, as in Dignity: They are to be viſible Paterns of Virtue to the World; and to be the more cautious in their Actions becauſe their Inferiors are wont to imitate them: For, as a very great Man ſaid, * *If a Ruler hearken to Lies, all his Servants are wicked*; if he live in the open Practice of any Vice, it ſhall be ſoon drawn into a general Example.

* Prov. xxix. 12.

SO 'tis with *Miniſters*, they have a proper Task belonging to them, and which is far different from that of others. They are to maintain Purity of Doctrine and Worſhip, and primitive Diſcipline, they are to divide the Word of God aright, and diſtribute to every one his Portion; they muſt not only aſſert the Truth, but refute Error and Hereſies, convince Gain-ſayers, withſtand the Adverſaries of the Goſpel, and manfully bear up againſt the bold Oppoſers of our moſt holy Religion. This alſo is common to them with ſecular Magiſtrates, that they muſt diſcountenance evil Practices by an exemplary Life. They muſt lead the Way to Virtue and Goodneſs, or elſe very few will follow; witneſs the Degeneracy of this Age, wherein Paſtor and People do too much reſemble one another.

THEN if we look into *Families*, there we may ſee particular Tasks incumbent on Perſons according to their different Relations and Degrees. A Maſter of a Family, a Parent, a Child, a Servant have their peculiar Provinces to manage. In the domeſtick Offices are requir'd Obedience, Love, Compliance, Faithfulneſs, Chaſtity, pious Education; in a Word, a prudent Adminiſtration of houſhold Affairs.

IN Reſpect of *Age* likewiſe we might obſerve that a particular and diſtinct Deportment is neceſſary. Years ſhould teach Wiſdom, Gravity becomes the aged: But the peculiar Care of *young* Men is to behave themſelves humbly and ſubmiſſively, to give Proofs of their Modeſty, to be docible, and willing to bear Reproof, to be ſweet and obliging in their Converſation, and to remember their Creator and Redeemer in the Days of their youthful and blooming Years.

THUS let every one mind his proper Work, the more eſpecial Buſineſs which his preſent and peculiar Circumſtances require at his Hands. † *To every thing there is a Seaſon, and a Time to every Purpoſe under Heaven*, ſaith our royal Preacher. Wherefore let us be careful to act according to this fit Seaſon, let us endeavour like the *bleſſed Man* (whom the Pſalmiſt deſcribes) *to bring forth our Fruit in due Seaſon*, to be buſied about the moſt *proper* Duties of our Lives. Many are employ'd, but what they do is impertinent and unſeaſonable, they forget their *own* Buſineſs, that which is required of them in thoſe Offices and Relations wherein they are placed at preſent. *Hoc age*, Mind the Work you are about, was the *Crier's* Word of old, when the *Gentile* Prieſt went about his religious Work: Let *Chriſtians* think they heard the ſame Caution proclaim'd aloud in their Ears, *mind your preſent Concern*, attend to the Buſineſs which the Circumſtances that you are now in call for; do that Work, diſcharge thoſe Duties which are moſt *proper* to be done. And I have particularly told you what they are.

† Eccl. iii. 1.

THERE is another, a third obſervable thing yet behind in the firſt general Part of the Text, and which we muſt by no Means omit. It is not enough to be doing, to be employ'd, but you have heard that every one muſt do that which is really Praiſe-worthy, and which is his proper Duty. Nor, is this ſufficient, for 'tis required here that we do it *with our Might. Whatſoever thy Hand findeth* &c. To be faint and languid, to be cold and indifferent is below the great Buſineſs of our Religion: Some ſorry Velleites and feeble Eſſays towards Virtue come far ſhort of what God expects of us. We muſt be very induſtrious and vigorous in our Undertakings and Actions that have Reſpect to Religion, eſpecially to thoſe Offices of it which we find to be moſt requiſite in the Circumſtances we are in. Here we are engaged to be very briſk and lively, to exert all the Powers of our Souls, to muſter up all our Forces, to make great and vehement Efforts, and to do nothing coldly and careleſly. This is excellently expreſs'd in the Language of holy Scripture, where we are enjoin'd * *to love the Lord our God with all our Heart, with all our Soul, and with all our Might*; or as our Saviour was pleas'd to comment upon it, § *with all our Mind, and with all our Strength*, with the utmoſt Exertment of all our Faculties. We are commanded to *ſtrive to enter in at the ſtreight Gate, to give Diligence to make our Calling and Election ſure.* And in a great Number of Places (as critical Readers know very well) the grand Undertakings of a Chriſtian's Life, and his Endeavours of Holineſs and Piety are compared to the *Combats* in the *Olympick Games*; where there was always very warm Work, where nothing was done without great Toiling, Labouring, Sweating, and an infinite deal of Care and Circumſpection. Whereby the Apoſtles (but St. *Paul* eſpecially, who is much delighted with Metaphors taken from thoſe Exerciſes) would inform us that Religion is accompanied with Abundance of Labour, that a Chriſtian muſt fight, and wreſtle, and ſtrive with great Application and Induſtry, that we muſt perform the Duties belonging to our ſeveral Stations and Callings, our particular Places and Relations, with the greateſt Intention and Earneſtneſs, and, in one very expreſſive Word, (uſed by the Holy Ghoſt here) *with our Might.*

* Deut. vi. 5.

§ Mark xii. 30.

NOW, to enforce this upon you, I muſt proceed to the ſecond general Part of the Text, and conſider the excellent and prevailing *Motive* which is added here. To ſtir us up effectually to the diſcharging of the preceding Duty, *Whatſoever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with thy Might*, this Argument is added, *For there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wiſdom in the Grave whither thou goeſt.* The Senſe of which Words may be different according to the Acception of the Word *Sheol* here uſed, which is thought by ſome Perſons to ſignify *the State of the dead*; and that is twofold, either the State of the *bleſſed* or of the *damned*, *Heaven* or *Hell.* Accordingly the Words may be differently interpreted. Wherefore firſt we will ſuppoſe *Solomon* here ſpeaking to thoſe that are *righteous* and *virtuous*, and who expect to arrive at Heaven, the State of the bleſſed, after this Life: And then the Meaning is this, Do all your Duty with your Might, be frequent and zealous in the Exerciſe of your Graces, for there are ſeveral of them which you will not be capable to exert hereafter. When you come to Heaven, you'll find other Employment: Therefore exerciſe theſe Graces now, whilſt you can. There are ſome peculiar Works which are calculated for this Life only, and are of no Uſe at all in the other. *Theſe* then you muſt principally concern yourſelves in, whilſt you are in this World, becauſe you muſt perform them now, or never. Here I will offer this uſeful Notion to you, that we ſhall not be in a Capacity hereafter to exert ſome of the Virtues which are commended to us now in this Life. Though the acting of Love to God and to our Brethren, and praiſing and rejoycing in him, and ſuch like Graces and Performances ſhall be the Work of pious Souls when they arrive at Heaven, as well as they are their Duty and Employment here on Earth; yet this is as true that there are ſome *other* Acts of Religion which are incumbent on us as our neceſſary Duty *now*, but they will not be practicable in another World.

FAITH, as great and renown'd a Grace as it is here, will be wholly uſeleſs hereafter: For it ſhall be turn'd into *Viſion*, and bleſſed Souls ſhall ſee and enjoy what before they believ'd. For the ſame Reaſon *Hope* (which is ſo comfortable a Grace in this World) muſt vaniſh in the next, for the Apoſtle's Logick is good, *Hope that is ſeen, is not Hope, for what a Man ſeeth, why doth he yet hope for?* Rom. viii. 24. There is no ſuch thing in Heaven as *Repentance*, for where there is no Sinning there is no Repenting. *Patience* is no Virtue that can be exercis'd in the State of the bleſſed, becauſe there is no Suffering there. So *Chaſtity* and *Sobriety* can be practis'd only here in this World, becauſe they have Reference to the Enjoyments of this Life. Nor have *Juſtice* and *Faithfulneſs* and *honeſt Dealing* any footing in the other World, becauſe theſe have Relation chiefly to the Commerce and Traffick which are between Men and Men. And the ſame may be ſaid concerning *Mercifulneſs* and *Charity*, as they reſpect the poor and neceſſitous; for there are no ſuch Objects of Charity in that bleſſed Place where there is no Indigence, no Miſery.

And as theſe and ſome other *Graces*, have a Period with our Lives, ſo thoſe great *Ordinances* and *Inſtitutions* of *Praying*, *Reading*, *Hearing*, *receiving the Sacraments* ſhall ceaſe at the ſame Time: And the Reaſon of it is plain, for theſe were appointed by God in order to the Attainment of Grace and Holineſs, and to fit and prepare us for Heaven.

MOREOVER, all the proper Duties towards our Relations, as of Parents, Children; Husbands, Wives; Maſters, Servants; Magiſtrates, Subjects; theſe likewiſe run parallel with our Duration here on Earth, and reach no further. Thus I have briefly ſhew'd you what Parts and Exerciſes of Religion paſs not with us into the other Life: Whence I conceive *Solomon* here takes Occaſion to exhort us *chiefly* to practiſe *thoſe* Graces, to be employ'd in thoſe Ordinances, to be exercis'd in thoſe Duties which we ſhall never practiſe again after we have left this World. You may aſſure yourſelves that theſe are your more *proper* Concern *now*, becauſe otherwiſe they would laſt even in Heaven. But from that Knowledge which we have reveal'd to us in the holy Scriptures concerning that bleſſed State, it appears that they ſhall then be impracticable: Wherefore we conclude that they are fit only for our preſent State. *The whole Armour of God* mention'd by the Apoſtle is to be put on *now*, not hereafter. Theſe Weapons are made for this Life, for the Church militant, not that triumphant, for there is no fighting, no combating there.

MIND then what is the proper Work and Employ of this Life, and be moſt buſie about that. Mind what Graces and Acts of Religion you have Occaſion to exerciſe here, and make them your peculiar Buſineſs. For none of theſe go with us to Heaven: That glorious State is utterly incapable of them. *There is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wiſdom* about theſe things in that future Reign of the Saints in Paradiſe. I am apprehenſive that this is not the *common* Interpretation of this Place, but if it be the *true* one, no underſtanding

Man will reject it for its Novelty. But let this be a new and freſh *Motive* to us to be holy and religious Be ſedulous in acting your Graces *now*, for this is the only Time in which we can do it.

Secondly, WE will ſuppoſe the Wiſe-man here addreſſing himſelf to thoſe that are *wicked*, thoſe that he obſerv'd to be as yet in an impenitent State. He deſires to reclaim ſuch by offering this Motive to them, if you do not abandon your Sins, and betake yourſelves to the Ways of Religion, and that *with your Might*, be it known to you that there is no Work, no Device, no Knowledge, no Wiſdom in *Hell:* For that alſo is the Signification of the *Hebrew* Word uſed here by *Solomon*, and tranſlated the *Grave*. In the Place of the damned there is no Repentance, no turning unto God, no attaining to any Virtue or Grace, no working out our Salvation; nay no *Device*, no ſuch Thought or Purpoſe, no practical *Knowledge* of it, no *Wiſdom* of ſo high a Nature. Therefore do what you can do now, ſtudy, ſtrive, labour: For after this Life there will be no *Work*, *i. e.* no farther Endeavours in order to Salvation and Happineſs. Think of it ſeriouſly, thoſe that are paſt this World are not in a Capacity of altering their Condition: They cannot do any thing towards a Change of their State. *The great Gulph is fixed* between the ſaved and the damned, their Fate is determined, and none in Heaven and Earth can reverſe it.

THIS is another Part of the Argument which the Royal Preacher uſeth here to enforce his foregoing Exhortation, *Whatſoever thy Hand* &c. Do it with all thy Strength and Vigour, put forth all thy Power and Force, for there is nothing to be done in the *Grave*, in the State of deceaſed Souls, or to ſpeak more plainly, in the Regions of the *damned*, whither (as we may judge by thy Actions) thou art going. There is no Repentance in Hell: Nor is there the Exerciſe of any other Virtue in order to your being ſaved. It is true, as 'twas ſaid of *Judas*, ſo in a *like* Senſe it may be ſaid of thoſe in the infernal Pit, that *they repent*, i. e. they are unſpeakably vexed and tormented in their Minds for what they have done, and they ten thouſand Times wiſh it undone: But this is not the *Repentance* we ſpeak of, this is a Repentance that will do them no Good: Yea, it will do them a great deal of Harm, becauſe it is neceſſarily attended with Anguiſh and Pain of Mind, with reſtleſs Torment of Conſcience, and even overwhelms them with Deſpair. Therefore, O Sinner, whatever thy Hand findeth to do, do it preſently; do it before thou paſſeſt out of this State of Trial into that other remedileſs Condition, where there is no true Repentance, and no Poſſibility of it.

THE Doctors of the Church of *Rome* comfort their Diſciples with the vain Belief and Hope of *Purgatory*, i. e. a third or middle State between Heaven and Hell. But this is a mere Deluſion, and this one Text which I am now preaching on is ſufficient to baffle this fond Conceit; for this inſpired and infallible Preacher aſſures us (maugre all the Pretences of the *Pontifician* Crew) that *there is no Work, nor Device in the Grave*; when this Life is at an End there is nothing more to be contrived or done with Reference to our eternal Salvation. The Apoſtle's Words are very obſervable to this Purpoſe, 2 *Cor.* v. 10. *We muſt all appear before the Judgment Seat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the Things done in his Body*, not out of his Body. Whilſt we are in this Tabernacle, we are to prepare ourſelves for the final Judgment; but when we are out of it, we cannot do it. The Conſideration of which ſhould put you upon a very zealous acting for God's Glory and the Welfare of your own Souls. What you deſign to do, diſpatch now; for this preſent World is the Place of Action and Duty; but the next is the State of Puniſhment and Reward.

AND it is ſeaſonable to conſider alſo that you have but a ſhort Duration in this World, therefore you are obliged to live apace, to be diligent and fervent in the Exerciſe of all your Graces and Virtues, for this Life will ſoon have a Period.

MOREOVER, remember this that you labour for *Eternity*, and therefore you cannot be too diligent and careful, too cautious and circumſpect. Heaven cannot be purchas'd too dear. No Pains and Endeavours are too great to obtain it. Say that by living religiouſly and godly you make yourſelves liable to ſome Dangers, ſay that you ſuffer for doing well; yet comfort yourſelves with this that Heaven is yet behind, and that will make Amends for all. Therefore

fore when you find yourſelves under Difficulties, take up that Saying of a very * pious Man, which he uſed a little before his Death, *Hold out Faith and Patience, your Work will quickly be at an End.* Be our Troubles never ſo preſſing and grievous, it will not be long before we ſhall be eas'd of them, we ſhall reſt from our Labours, and be tranſlated into the Manſions of undiſturbed Happineſs. Therefore go on in the Ways of Religion and Holineſs, and let nothing interrupt you. Employ all your Talents to the Purpoſes for which they were given you, and be always remembring that God will ſhortly call you to an Account for them. Think how inexcuſable thoſe Perſons will be at that Day who have ſat idle, and with their Arms acroſs, who have enterprized no virtuous Thing, who have atchiev'd nothing worthy of their Profeſſion, who have not advantaged the Church of God nor the civil Community by the Talents and Gifts they have received.

AGAIN, think of this, that never any Man, when he came to die, was troubled that he had made Religion his Buſineſs, that he was mindful of his great Work, and that his chief Care was about that. No Man ever complain'd upon his Death-bed that he had been too religious and pious, too juſt or too charitable, too watchful over his Heart and too circumſpect in his Life. Yea, the *more* active Men have been in Religion, the more comfortable hath been their Paſſage out of the World. The greater *Motion*, the greater *Reſt*; as I find the † ſame Word among the *Hebrews* ſignify both. But on the contrary, your Conſciences will tell you ſad and diſmal Stories if you have been idle and remiſs, and ſpent your Days in a continued Neglect and Forgetfulneſs of your main Concern. When you come to bid adieu to the World, your *Talents*, if unimprov'd, will *lie heavy* upon you, and ſink you down into the botomleſs Pit. When your Conſciences are awakened on a Bed of Sickneſs, or by ſome remarkable Judgment of God upon you, or by the Summons of Death, you will then reflect on an ill-ſpent Life with infinite Regret and Diſſatisfaction, with Dread and Horrour, and the utmoſt Confuſion. To prevent this, apply yourſelves to your Work betimes, and *ſeek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs.*

IT is true, the whole Time and Extent of your Lives is the Time of working: Nothing but Death is to be the Stint and Period of it. *Man goeth forth unto his Work, and to his Labour until this Evening.* But though his Time of working be thus large, yet the *choice Seaſons* of it are of a narrower Compaſs. Know therefore firſt that there is the Seaſon of Man's Ability and Strength, the Days of Health, Youth and Manhood. Theſe may be ſtiled the Summer of Man's Life, and are the chief Time of Labour. But Sickneſs and old Age are Winter, and then the Days are ſhort, and his Sun is declining, and the Night is dark and tedious, and little or no Work is done. To you then let me addreſs my ſelf, to you that are in the Flower and Strength of your Age; be perſuaded to remember yout Creator now, and to make Religion the great Work of your Lives. Know this, that it will not be Summer always; the Days of Youth, and Health, and Strength muſt give Way to thoſe of Weakneſs, Diſtemper, and old Age: Which after the former Part of a Life evilly ſpent will be very uncomfortable and uneaſy. Therefore I beſeech you underſtand your true Intereſt, and embrace this choice Opportunity which you now have of diſpatching that great and weighty Buſineſs which relates to another World.

BESIDES, there are *other Seaſons* which carry a certain Advantage and Fitneſs of Time along with them: And 'tis great Folly and Madneſs to let them paſs. They are ſuch as theſe, the Time of the Spirit's Regency and Influence on our Hearts, when this holy Dove hovers over us, and begets in us good Deſires, pious Thoughts, religious Inclinations, and ſuitable Affections; when it accompanies the hearing of the Word (as I hope and pray it may at this Time) and other Adminiſtrations of the Goſpel: Alſo the Time of temporal and outward Bleſſings, *viz.* When theſe are heapt upon us by Heaven and are indeed deſign'd to lead our Minds *thither:* Likewiſe the Time of Calamity and Affliction, which is alſo deſign'd by God to teach us Righteouſneſs. And in ſhort, all the remarkable Inſtances of God's Providence towards us are *critical Seaſons* to be improved by us. Be very careful to obſerve and underſtand theſe particular Opportunities, be very careful to make uſe of them. Be apprehenſive of this that now is the acceptable Time, now is the Day of Salvation: And

* Mr. *Bolton.*

† Ragang. movere, quieſcere.

be not ſuch Fools as to neglect them. You know not but this may be the laſt Sermon that ſome of you may hear, for the Breath is in your Noſtrils, and it may ſoon expire; and one of your Pariſh is now in the Grave who was alive the laſt Lord's Day. And whoſe Turn may be the next, none of you knows. Embrace the preſent Offer of Mercy, and whilſt it is call'd to Day hearken to the Tenders of Life and Happineſs. Every Day behave yourſelves as if it were your laſt. Act as if you were to die immediately. Do what you would do if you were leaving the World; I mean this as to the Lawfulneſs and Warrantableneſs of your Actions. Live as if you were to anſwer preſently before the great Judge of Heaven and Earth.

To conclude, now is the *Day-Time*, therefore work before the Night comes: Now is the Time of *Battle* (for our Life is call'd a Warfare) therefore fight the good Fight of Faith and Holineſs: Now is the *Race*; ſo run that you may obtain: Now is the *Seed-Time*; therefore in the Morning ſow thy Seed, and in the Evening with-hold not thy Hand. And to *encourage* you to all this, remember that if you employ the Day in Work, you ſhall at the Cloſe of it receive your *Wages:* If you fight valiantly, you ſhall not fail of *Victory:* If you run, you ſhall certainly win the *Prize:* If you ſow now, you ſhall joyfully *reap* at the great *Harveſt*, which is the End of the World.

Now to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt be all Honour and Praiſe now and ever. Grant we beſeech, Almighty God, &c.

A
DISCOURSE
OF THE
Imitation of CHRIST.

JOHN xii. 15.

For I have given you an Example, that ye ſhould do as I have done unto you.

MAN is obſerved to be a Creature naturally given to *Imitation:* Examples have a great deal more Influence on him, than Laws and Precepts. Theſe latter he ſlightly caſts his Eye upon, but he fixeth it with great Earneſtneſs on the former; becauſe he delights to live, and act as he ſees others do. This being Man's natural Genius and Propenſion, he ought to take the greater heed *whom* he imitates, he is concerned to ſet before him the *beſt* and *choiceſt Examples*. And becauſe this is ſo difficult a Thing, and that wherein Men generally fail, even to their utter Ruin and Damnation; behold, here the compaſſionate and loving Jeſus directs them to the beſt and worthieſt Object of their Imitation! even his bleſſed Self; who was deſigned by Heaven, to be the grand Pattern of all Virtues and Graces to Mankind, and who did his Actions for this very End, that we might take notice of them, and follow them, as he tells us expreſsly; *I have given you an Example, that ye ſhould do as I have done unto you.* For this we are to know, That

CHRIST JESUS came not only to be a *Saviour*, and *Redeemer*, but a *Pattern*, and *Example.* He was deſigned to bleſs the World with his Preſence, that corrupted and depraved Mankind, beholding his Life and Behaviour, might ſee the Error and Folly of their Ways, and be reduced to a godly and holy Practice. This therefore is that which is my preſent Concern; *viz.* to propound to you the Example of our bleſſed Lord and Saviour. You are to be taught, not only by his Precepts, but by his Actions. This then is the plain Propoſition I am to inſiſt upon, That all who name the Name of Chriſt are indiſpenſibly obliged to follow his Example, and to do as he hath done: Or more briefly thus, Chriſtians ought to imitate Chriſt. In proſecution of which, I am to ſhew you, 1*ſt. Wherein* we are to imitate Chriſt. 2*dly.* The *Reaſons* why we are to do ſo. 3*dly.* I will *apply* all.

I. *WHEREIN* are we to imitate our bleſſed Lord and Saviour? This Demand is very neceſſary, for though * every Action of Chriſt is for our Imitation, yet this is to be underſtood in a *limited* Senſe; for it is certain, that all Chriſt's Actions are not imitable by us. As there are ſome Graces and Duties that the Goſpel commands us, and that we are bound to attain to, which yet Chriſt was not capable of, as Faith (ſo far as it reſpects Himſelf,) and Repentance, and every Duty which pre-ſuppoſes a Sin: So likewiſe, there are ſome Actions of Chriſt, which we are not capable of, and which it would be Folly in us to endeavour to imitate. Here I will proceed *firſt* Negatively, and *ſecondly* Poſitively; that is, I will ſhew you *firſt*, What Actions are *not* to be imitated, and then what *are.*

* Omnis Chriſti actio eſt noſtra imitatio. *Cypr.* L. 2. E. 3.

Firſt, WE are not to attempt to imitate Chriſt in thoſe Actions, which he did by his extraordinary and divine Power, namely, his miraculous Works, as Faſting forty Days, and forty Nights, turning Water into Wine, feeding Thouſands with a few ſmall Loaves, curing inveterate Diſeaſes, caſting out Devils, allaying Tempeſts with a Word, and even raiſing the Dead. Theſe being *Miracles*, that is, the mere Products of his infinite Power, and Godhead, are not ſo much as to be attempted by us. The Poets relate, that *Salmoneus* ſtrove to imitate *Jove*'s *Thunder*, and was ſlain with a real Thunder-Bolt. Such (without *Fiction*) may be expected to be the Recompence of our preſumptious emulating the miraculous Undertakings, and Works of Chriſt: Therefore, we muſt not entertain a Thought of doing as He did, as to theſe. And to theſe I may add, thoſe Actions of His, which were arbitrary and abſolute, and Arguments of His uncontrolable Dominion, as he was Lord of the World: Such were his Curſing the Fig-tree, his Whipping the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple, *&c.* Theſe he did, as he was Sovereign, and Lord of the Univerſe, and could diſpoſe of Things and Perſons as he pleaſed. But *We*, being of another and inferior Rank, have no Authority to act thus; and therefore Chriſt is not to be imitated by us in Actions of this Kind.

NEITHER *ſecondly*, can we imagine, that we can or ought to imitate Chriſt in his Undertakings, and Actions, as he was extraordinarily ſent by God, to be a Mediator and Redeemer; he both did and ſuffer'd many Things thus, which were peculiar to Him, and are above our Imitation; and yet in *ſome Senſe*, we are to make him our Pattern, even as to thoſe. His *Nativity* muſt be copied out in our ſpiritual Birth, in our being *born again*; Chriſt bore his Croſs, when he went to ſuffer Death for us; and we are bid *to take up our Croſs and follow him.* Chriſt was crucified, ſo the Apoſtle commends to us, by his own Practice, a ſpiritual Crucifixion, *Gal.* ii. 20. vi. 14. He *died*, and we muſt in a proportionate Manner do ſo to: We are to be *dead with Chriſt*, Rom. vi. 8. Col. ii. 20. 2 Tim. ii. 11. He offered up himſelf a *Sacrifice.* We are enjoined to preſent *our Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reaſonable Service.* He was *buried*, and we muſt be *buried with him by Baptiſm*, Rom. vi. 4. and we muſt find a Grave for our Sins. He was *raiſ'd* *up from the Dead, by the Glory of the Father,* and *we muſt riſe with Chriſt,* Col. iii. 1. *and walk in Newneſs of Life,* Rom. vi. 4. And *being riſen with Chriſt,* we are to *aſcend* with him alſo, and *ſeek thoſe Things that are above.* By our Affections, Thoughts, Wiſhes, Deſires, and Prayers, we muſt converſe with our Lord, now in Heaven. And laſtly, as Chriſt was *exalted to the right Hand of God,* ſo *God, who is rich in Mercy, hath made us to ſit together in heavenly Places, in Chriſt Jeſus,* Eph. ii. 6. Thus we ſee all the Undertakings of Chriſt are to be exemplified in us, they are to be repeated and acted over again, in a ſpiritual Manner, and by way of Likeneſs; but not otherwiſe: For it were Blaſphemy, to aſſert that we can really follow him, in his mediatory Actions, and ſuch as he did, as he undertook the Recovery and Salvation of loſt Man.

Thirdly, WE are not to imitate Him in *ſome* Actions which he did, as he was *Man, viz.* Thoſe which he did, as being in that peculiar State and Condition, which he was then in. To inſtance in his Poverty, he had no Houſe of his own to dwell in, he had no Incomes and Revenues to live upon, he was maintained by the Charity and Benevolence of others, he lived upon Gifts and Alms. This was voluntary in him, and he thought fit to chooſe this State, rather than the other; becauſe he came to ſuffer for Mankind, and to lay down his Life for us: Wherefore, he would have his Life ſuitable to his Death, and he knew that Riches, and great Abundance, were not agreeable with his Sufferings, and Perſecutions. This (as I ſhall ſhew you anon,) teacheth us to deſpiſe the World's Splendor, and Grandeur; but we are not authoriz'd by this Example of our Saviour, to chooſe a Life of Poverty. For, we are not in the ſame Circumſtances with Him; and therefore, we are exempted from following him in ſuch Things.

Fourthly, SOME Acts he did, only to ſignify and teach ſome *greater* Thing, not intending that the bare Action ſhould be drawn into Example. Thus even in the very Inſtance, to which the preſent Text refers; we are not to imagine, that we are bound to imitate it, in the literal and ſtrict Meaning of it. The Apoſtles, it is true, *waſhed one another's Feet,* in Imitation of their Lord's Example, yet this is to be remembred, that the Cuſtom and Uſage of *that Country* gave Occaſion to this Practice; for the Climate being very warm, and the Ways duſty, and their Feet not ſo well guarded as ours are, it was common to have their Feet waſhed, and cleanſed after their travelling; but now in theſe *Northern* Countries, to waſh one another's Feet would be very incongruous and improper; and therefore, we may judge hence of the annual Practice of ſome Princes, who, on a certain Day, waſh the Feet of poor and aged Perſons, which tho' 'tis done with a good and pious Meaning, yet I conceive, that 'tis improper and indecorous, becauſe it doth not agree with theſe cold Climates. That which our Saviour's Example, and the Text oblige us to, (as you ſhall hear afterwards) is to condeſcend to our Brethren, in thoſe Things which are Fitting and Neceſſary; and wherein we may give a real Demonſtration of our Willingneſs to be ſerviceable and officious to them, and humbly to ſubmit to inferior Employments, for their Sake. But as to this particular Action of *waſhing the Feet* of others, Chriſt's Example doth not engage us to do the very ſame Thing: Wherefore, thoſe fooliſh *Anabaptiſts* in *Germany,* who thought and practis'd otherwiſe, *i. e.* who waſh'd one another's Feet, becauſe Chriſt waſh'd his Diſciples, were but apiſh Imitators of our Saviour. They were the ſame fond Race of Men who *wore Sandals,* and *preached on the Houſe-tops,* and *ſaluted no Man by the Way,* &c. in Imitation (as they declared) of Chriſt's Diſciples: But any Men of ſober Reaſon, may ſee, that our Saviour and his Diſciples were not to be follow'd in Things of this Nature, and that it is unreaſonable, and abſurd, yea ridiculous, to do ſo.

IN the next Place, more *poſitively:* Though Chriſt be not to be imitated by us in his miraculous Works, which he wrought as *God,* nor in the Works of Redemption and Sanctification, which were proper and peculiar to him as *Mediator,* nor in *ſome* Acts which he did as *Man;* yet in his moral Works of Obedience to the Law, and in his religious Acts, proper to the Goſpel Diſpenſation, he may, and muſt be our Exemplar. As he was Man, he paid his Homage and Devotion to his Creator; as he was Man, *Duty* was required of him; and therefore he obey'd the divine Laws, and he was obliged to it. In theſe Things we ought to frame and compoſe our Lives according to his, and we cannot be excuſed from it.

YET, Here alſo there is a Reſtriction, for we cannot think to imitate Him, as to the *Heighth* and *Perfection* of his Obedience; he cannot be followed in the *higheſt Degrees* of it, which were every way exact and compleat; we cannot hope to reach to his Treaſure. It would be unſufferable Preſumption and Folly to think to do ſo, for the Condition and State we are in, as fallen Creatures, will not admit of it: But ſo far as we are capable, and in ſuch a Degree, as our finite and limited Nature will allow; that is, according to our Proportion, and according to our Ability, we are to tread in his Steps; we cannot equal Chriſt in any Virtue, but let our earneſt Endeavours and Study be to do what we can; we ought to ſtrive to write after his Copy, although we muſt needs fall ſhort of the Excellency of the Original; we muſt endeavour to follow him as cloſe as we can,—*quamvis non paſſibus æquis*, tho' we are not able to keep pace with him: This is all that is required of us, that we trace our Saviour in all the imitable Parts of his Life, and therein zealouſly aſpire to the Utmoſt we can do. Chriſt is to be our Example in all thoſe Things in which either himſelf bids us follow him, or which the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles exhort us to imitate him in. And theſe are the Things which conſtitute the practical Part of Religion, the Virtues and Graces, whereby we are made really good, and like unto God. This is the nobleſt Part of Chriſtianity; for to be like God, is the Perfection of our Nature, and the moſt conſummate State we are capable of.

I AM now then, in the next Place, to ſhew you more diſtinctly and particularly, wherein we are to imitate Chriſt; namely, in his *Humility* and *Condeſcention*, in his *Self-denial* and *Mortification*, in his *extenſive Love* and *Charity*, in his *religious* and *devout Converſe with God*, in his *patient Deportment under his extraordinary Sufferings:* Laſtly, in his *conſtant beating down of all Sin*, and his *encouraging* and *promoting of Holineſs*. Theſe are the proper Objects of your Emulation, as being of the Number of thoſe Things, which are truly * *precious* and *honourable*; the Poſſeſſors of which, ſaith the great Philoſopher, are juſtly to be *imitated* by us.

I. IMITATE the holy Life of Chriſt in being *humble* and *condeſcending*. Should we here inſiſt on his Birth, his Life, and his Death, we ſhould find them all to be ſignal Inſtances of his deep *Humility*. He was pleas'd to aſſume human Fleſh, and to be born of a Woman, and to undergo the Frailties and Infirmities incident to the Condition of poor Infants. In the very ſame Year that he was born he was hurried away into *Egypt*, and there ſtay'd till he was Eight or Nine Years Old (for ſo long *Herod* Reigned after the Holy Babe fled out of *Judea*): On his return he came and lived at *Nazareth* in *Galilee*, (whence he was call'd a *Nazarene* by the Prophets, and a *Galilean* by ſome of his Enemies, who uſed it as a Name of Reproach, whence the Chriſtians were call'd *Galileans* by *Julian*, *Porphyrius*, and others) and we hear nothing more of this Bleſſed Child till he arrived at his twelfth Year; at which time he went with his Parents to *Jeruſalem* to keep the Paſſover, and there he was loſt three Days, and at laſt found in the Temple, where he gave an early Specimen of his ſingular Wiſdom in diſputing with the *Hebrew* Doctors and Rabbies. Then he return'd with his Parents to *Nazareth*, and the whole Space of his Life, from this very Time till he was 30 Years Old is ſummed up only thus, *He came with them to Nazareth, and was ſubject unto them*, Luke ii. 51. Not one of the Evangeliſts ſaith a Word more of Chriſt all that Time: Unleſs you add the Teſtimony of the *Jews* concerning him, (and they were competent Judges in the Caſe) as it is recorded by St. *Mark*, Chap. vi. 3. *Is not this the Carpenter?* Which intimates that He, as well as his reputed Father, work'd at that Trade. So that his *Obedience to his Parents*, and his *following an honeſt Calling* were the two only things remarkable in the far greateſt Part of his Life: And both of theſe were notable Diſcoveries of his *humble* and *ſubmiſſive* Temper, of his meek and condeſcending Spirit.

THE latter, namely, his Calling of a *Carpenter* (tho' queſtion'd by * Origen) is acknowledg'd by *Juſtin Martyr* in his *Dialogue* with *Trypho*, where you'l find that Antient Father aſſerting that Chriſt was of *Joſeph's* Trade, and work'd in it under him. And it is probable that when *Joſeph* died, he wrought alone, and was call'd no more *the Carpenter's Son*, but *the Carpenter:* For ſo we tranſlate the

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* ἔντιμα ἀγαθά. Ariſtot. Rhet.

* Cont. *Celſ.* lib. 6.

Greek Word τέκτων, although it be of a more general ſignification, and (as *Heſychius* and *Suidas* obſerve) denotes any *Artificer*, *Workman* or *Handycrafts-man*, who makes things out of ſome Matter or Stuff, be it Iron or Wood, or any ſuch thing. *Hilary* on Mat. xiii. 55. and *Bede* on *Mark* ii. take the *Greek* Word to ſignify one that worketh on Iron; ſo that by this it appears he thought the Trade wherein our Saviour work'd was that of a *Smith*, not of a *Carpenter*. But they conſider'd not that the Word is put here *abſolutely* and without any *Addition*, and then in the beſt and moſt approved Authors it always ſignifies one that works in Wood: And accordingly it is rightly tranſlated a *Carpenter*; and it is likely that our Saviour was a Servant or Apprentice to his Father in Law, and under him did that ſort of Work which belongs to that Occupation. *Juſtin* (whom I before mention'd) is of Opinion that he living in the Country, made *Ploughs* and *Yokes*, and that this was a great part of his Trade: Whence he uſed theſe Terms of the *Yoke* and the *Plough* in *Mat.* ii. 29. *Luke* ix. 62. ſymbolically applying them to the Goſpel. This was the *humble Jeſus*, who as he lived in Subjection to his Mother and ſuppoſed Father, ſo he diſdain'd not to exerciſe himſelf in a mean Employment, that of a poor Country-carpenter or Plough-wright: And ſo he continu'd till he was 30 Years of Age.

AND then when he took upon him a greater and nobler Employment, and appear'd abroad, and ſhew'd himſelf in the World, he ſtill gave Proofs of the ſame *humble* and *lowly* Frame of Spirit in his free and familiar Converſing with the meaneſt and pooreſt Perſons, in ſo much that the Apoſtles wondred at him on this very Account. He held Diſcourſe with the Woman of *Samaria*, one of a mean rank, and courted no better than a *Schiſmatick* by the other *Jews*. He diſdain'd not the Company of the beggerly *Ciſtiferi*, thoſe that went about with Baskets to hold any Scraps they pick'd up; for theſe were the *Baskets* Chriſt fill'd with *Fragments* of Bread and Meat, *Mat.* xiv. 19. This Rabble of the *Jews*, this contemptible Sort of Men Chriſt converſed with, and ſhew'd great Kindneſs to. He was not one that out of a proud and ſupercilious Humour cloiſter'd himſelf up from Society, and grew ſullen and moroſe; but he was pleas'd to be preſent at publick Entertainments, to be a Gueſt at a Wedding-Feaſt, and he frequently converſed in Cities and Towns. He affected not Singularity, but conform'd to the civil Uſages and common Cuſtoms of the Place. In his Converſe he was fair, generous, and condeſcending, and had nothing of Moroſity, Rigour and Auſterity. From that Cavil which was rais'd againſt him, that *he came eating and drinking*, we gather that he uſed a Freedom in his Converſation, that he was friendly and ſociable, and behaved himſelf courteous and obliging, ſweet and affable and charming to the worſt of Men.

AND as he was humble himſelf, ſo he reproved Pride and Haughtineſs of Spirit in others. When his Diſciples contended among themſelves who ſhould be the greateſt, he rebuked their Ambition * *by ſetting a Child in the midſt of them*, acquainting them that they muſt *become as little Children*, if they thought of *entering into the Kingdom of Heaven. Whoſoever ſhall humble himſelf*, ſaith he, *as a little Child*, *the ſame is the greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven.* In like Manner He dealt with them when they diſputed about Priority, *Luke* xxii. 24. *&c.* Letting them know that the affecting of *Dominion* and *Authority* did not become them, and they ought not to be proud and lofty when they had ſo humble and meek a Maſter. *Whoſoever will be Chief among you*, (ſaith he on the ſame Occaſion, *Mat.* xx. 27.) *let him be your Servant*, *even as the Son of Man came not to be miniſtred unto*, *but to miniſter*. What a famous Inſtance of Humility is that in this Chapter wherein the Text is, *viz.* his Stooping down and Waſhing his Apoſtles Feet, which to do was counted a mean and ſervile Action in that Country? But this was for their Imitation, as he tells them, † *Know you what I have done to you? If I your Lord and Maſter have waſhed your Feet, ye alſo ought to waſh one anothers Feet. For I have given you an Example, that ye ſhould do as I have done to you.* They were to perform the ſame ſervile Office to one another upon occaſion in that Country: And they and all Chriſt's Followers, in what Nation ſoever, were to carry themſelves *humbly* towards one another, and not to be imperious and dominering. Shall any Service of Love ſeem baſe and mean to us, ſince our Bleſſed Saviour was ſo ready to miniſter to his Diſciples? You muſt lay aſide your State when you may be helpful and beneficial to the Poor, in viſiting them when they are ſick, or in miniſtring

* Mat. xviii. 2, 3, 4.

† v. 12, 14.

to them in their Sickneſs, or whenever they ſtand in need of your Help. And ſo likewiſe in Caſe of *Offence*, you muſt lay aſide your Greatneſs and Superiority, (if there be any) over your Brethren, and ſeek to be reconciled, confeſſing your Faults and deſiring Forgiveneſs. Stand not upon Terms and Punctilio's when Chriſtianity and an indiſpenſible Duty of it are concerned.

AND under Chriſt's *Humility* I may reckon his Obedience to the Government he lived under. As he obey'd his Parents (of which we ſpake before) ſo he behaved himſelf dutifully toward his civil Governours. He that was Lord of the whole World paid Tribute to the *Roman* Emperor. We read in *Mat.* xvii. 27. that he commanded a Piece of Money to be given for himſelf and *Peter* to the Taxers, yea, he wrought a Miracle to pay that Tax. Which is the more remarkable becauſe Chriſt was free, and needed not to have paid any Tribute-money. He was born King of the *Jews*, that Kingdom being due to him by hereditary Right derived for *David*: Yet he liv'd as a Subject, and was obedient to the ſecular Powers that had the preſent Poſſeſſion, and accordingly paid his Tribute-money; for the *Jews* were now tributary to the *Romans*, and had been ſo threeſcore Years before Chriſt's Birth, that Country coming under the Power of the *Romans*, when Pompey took *Jeruſalem* and deſtroy'd it. Chriſt would not oppoſe the preſent Settlement, but ſhew'd himſelf obedient to it. And he taught others to do ſo, *Render unto Cæſar*, ſaith he, *the Things that are Cæſar*'s, meaning *Tiberius* who then rul'd, and who reigned after Chriſt's Paſſion about five Years. Chriſt bids them pay Tribute to the wicked Emperor under whom he afterwards ſuffer'd on the Croſs. From this Example we learn Peaceableneſs and Obedience, we are taught to acknowledge the higher Powers, and to ſhew Subjection to their Government. It becomes us to follow Chriſt in this (as well as in other things), namely, not frowardly to diſpute the Commands of our lawful Rulers, not to be of the Number of thoſe † *ſelf-willed* and *preſumptious* Spirits who *deſpiſe Government*; but to be obedient to Men as well as to God, to obey the Prince for God's ſake and for Conſcience ſake. Or, if * that Opinion be true that the δίδραχμα (which we tranſlate *Tribute-money*,) was a Church-duty, *i. e.* the half Shekel which every Iſraelite annually paid, it ſtill inſtructs us in our Obedience, and lets us know that as we are Members of an Eccleſiaſtical Society, we ought to obſerve the lawful Cuſtoms and Uſages that belong to it; that it becomes us to comply with the innocent Practices which are enjoin'd us by the Governors of the Church, as well as by thoſe of the Common-wealth.

AND as Chriſt's whole *Life* ſo his *Death* was an amazing Act of *Condeſcention*. Which is taken Notice of by the Apoſtle, when he ſaith, *He being in the Form of God thought it not Robbery to be equal with God, but made himſelf of no Reputation, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeneſs of Man: And being found in Faſhion as a Man he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs*, Phil. ii. 6,7, 8. Here was an Inſtance of *tranſcendent Humility*, ſuch as never was or can be parallel'd. But becauſe I ſhall have Occaſion to ſpeak of this under another Head, I diſmiſs it at preſent. Let us now only ſet the foregoing Inſtances before our Eyes, and learn to be *humble*. Let us hearken to our Saviour himſelf calling to us to imitate him in this excellent Virtue; *Learn of me*, ſaith he, *for I am meek and lowly in Heart*, Mat. xi. 29. Our Bleſſed Lord propounds himſelf here as our Pattern: Shall we not think ourſelves concern'd to follow him? The Apoſtle perſuading the *Philippians* to *Lowlineſs of Mind*, preſents this grand Exemplar to them, *Let this Mind*, ſaith he, *be in you which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus*, Phil. ii. 5. He left us an Example of meek and condeſcending Carriage: Therefore let us reſemble him, let us be humble and lowly, and that not only in our Hearts but in our Lives.

2. IMITATE Chriſt in his *Self-denial* and *Mortification*. Theſe he eminently ſhew'd in divers Emergencies of his Life; as firſt, in deſpiſing the World's *Honour* and *Applauſe*. He obſcured even his Divinity itſelf for many Years, he lay hid in a corner of *Galilee*, (as hath been partly ſuggeſted already) he abſconded in a Cotage at *Nazareth*, and conceal'd his divine Power and Miſſion. He launch'd not out into the World till thirty Years or more of his Life were expired. And Afterwards likewiſe he was obſerv'd to conceal his Worth, and to avoid all Oſtentation: Sometimes when he wrought Miracles, he would not let them take Air: He ſtrictly enjoyned Perſons to hold their Peace, to ſay nothing of him, but to give Honour to God; herein verifying what he profeſs'd in *John* viii. 50.

† 2 Pet. ii. 10.

* Dr. *Lightfoot*'s Harmony of the New Teſtament.

I ſeek not my own Glory. Let us in this reſemble our Lord, let us not blow a Trumpet, and ſound our own Praiſes, when we are enabled by God's Strength to do any good Act, but let God have the Glory of all we can do: And that the bleſſed Jeſus did not aſpire to Grandeur and Honour, cannot be better demonſtrated, than by his refuſing a *Crown*; when they would have *made him King*, he fled from them, and ſlighted that ſplendid Title, and contemned thoſe gay and goodly Offers: Which may juſtly check our fond and ambitious Deſires of great Preferments and Dignities, and ſuppreſs in us all vain Glory, and an inordinate Love of Fame and Applauſe.

Secondly, HE deſpiſed the *Riches* and *Wealth* of this World. He lived all his Life in a mean and poor Condition, eſpecially when he appeared openly in the Face of the World; and when he had the greateſt Temptations to enrich himſelf, then his Meanneſs was more viſibly obſerved: He had no ſettled Habitation to repair to, but wandred from Place to Place; *The Foxes have Holes, and the Birds of the Air have Neſts, but the Son of Man had no where to lay his Head*, Matt. viii. 20. When the Tax-gatherers came to him, he had no Money to ſatisfy them, but (as hath been ſaid) fled to a Miracle to furniſh them with Tribute for *Cæſar*; yet this was the Perſon who could have commanded all the Wealth of the World: And *Satan*, to tempt him with this Bait, offered him all the Kingdoms of the Earth, and the Glory and Riches of them: But he refuſed ſuch ſorry Offers, and counted the Deſpiſing of Wealth, his greateſt Riches; which ſhould teach all his Followers, tho' not to chuſe Poverty, (which Chriſt did for *peculiar* Reaſons, which I mentioned before,) yet to be always prepared for it; and to entertain low Thoughts of worldly Pelf and Gain, and to conſider ſeriouſly our Saviour's Query, *What is a Man profited if he ſhall gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul?* Which is a downright Negative, and is as much as if he had ſaid, A Man is not in the leaſt profited, if he gains the World with the Loſs of his Soul. Let us not then ſet our Hearts on this worldly Treaſure, let us not be Servants of *Mammon*, remembring that we cannot ſerve God and Him together: And therefore let us be mindful of the true Riches, and lay up for ourſelves a Treaſure in Heaven.

Thirdly, OUR Saviour deſpiſed the *Pleaſures* of this World. He was dead to carnal Delights, and ſinful Entertainments which debauch the Soul; yea, he uſed to abridge himſelf of his bodily Refreſhment and Repaſt, that he might be more intent on the Service of God. This may be the Meaning of the *Pſalmiſt*'s Words, ſo far as they refer to Chriſt, *He ſhall drink of the Brook in the Way*, Pſal. cx. 7. That is, [*] he ſhall neglect himſelf and his ordinary Food, in the Diſcharge of his Father's Will; he ſhall ſuſtain and refreſh himſelf, with what comes next to Hand, as a General in Perſuit drinks of the next Brook that is in the Way. The [†] Goſpel relates, that when the Diſciples deſired him to eat, his Reply was, *He had Meat to eat which they knew not of*: And again, *My Meat is to do the Will of him that ſent me.* In Proſecution of which, he oftentimes forgat his ordinary Suſtenance, and macerated his Body with Faſting, and long Abſtinence: When he was received and entertained at *Bethany* by the two Siſters, he preferred the holy Retiredneſs of *Mary*, before the buſy Miniſtry of *Martha*; he openly [‖] commended the former, but gave a Check to the latter. Herein he calls for our Imitation, and bids us be moderate in the Enjoyment of the good Things of this Life; he would have us be ſparing in the Uſe of all worldly Delights and Pleaſures; his Will is, that we ſhould confine our vain Deſires, and ſelfiſh Appetites, and make no Proviſion for the Fleſh, to fulfill the Luſts thereof. And indeed, how can we be ſenſual and carnal, having ſo mortified a Maſter? How can we be ſoft and effeminate, and intemperately indulge our Delights, when our bleſſed Lord hath given us ſuch an Example of Self-denial?

Fourthly, HIS Self-denial was apparently ſeen in his entire Reſigning himſelf to God's Will and Pleaſure. *I ſeek not my own Will*, ſaith he, *but the Will of the Father who hath ſent me*, John v. 30. And again, *I came down from Heaven, not to do my own Will, but the Will of him that ſent me*, John vi. 38. In this let us be mindful to follow our Maſter, let us ſubmit ourſelves wholly to the divine Conduct and Guidance, caſting our Care upon God, and depending on his Providence for our Support. Let us take Care that we reſiſt not Heaven, and oppoſe ourſelves to the Will of God; but let us yield up ourſelves to him, and know that we are ſafeſt when we do ſo.

Laſtly,

[*] Doctor *Hammond* in loc.

[†] John iv. 32. 34.

[‖] Luke x. 41, 42.

Laſtly, CHRIST is propounded to us as an Example of Self-denial, in that he was pleaſed to bear with the Infirmities and Frailties of Men, * *We that are ſtrong*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *ought to bear the Infirmities of the Weak, and not to pleaſe ourſelves; but let every one of us pleaſe his Neighbour, for his Good to Edification; for even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf.* Chriſt's Example, as to this ſignal Part of Self-denial, is here offered to us, as juſt Matter of our Imitation; *He pleaſed not himſelf*, that he might comport with the Frailties of his Creatures. Let us then never dare to pleaſe ourſelves with the indamaging, yea, deſtroying our Brethrens Souls; let us not be ſtiff and rigid in Matters of Indifferency, (for of ſuch the Apoſtle there ſpeaks) when a weak Brother's eternal Welfare is concerned; let us take heed of wilfully *offending any of the little Ones*, thoſe that are weak in Faith, and labour under Doubts and Scruples of Conſcience: Since Chriſt did not pleaſe himſelf, why ſhould we? Since he bore with the Weak, certainly we ought to do ſo too; ſince he was ſo mortified and ſelf-denying a Perſon, let us tread in his Steps, *Let our Moderation be known unto all Men:* In a Word, let us remember our Saviour's Advice and Command, *If any man will come after me*, (that is, be my Diſciple) *let him deny himſelf*, Luke ix. 23.

* Rom. xv. 1, 2, 3.

3. IMITATE Chriſt Jeſus in his *extenſive Love* and *Charity*, in his *exact Juſtice and Righteouſneſs* towards Men. For I join both theſe together becauſe of their Affinity, ſeeing he that acts *charitably* gives Men their *Due*, (for we *owe* Love and Kindneſs to all) and he that acts *juſtly* proves *beneficial* and *kind* to his Neighbours. None was a greater Obſerver of Juſtice and honeſt Dealing than our Lord: None was more averſe either to open Violence and Oppreſſion, or to a more ſecret Defrauding and Injuring of others. He often preſs'd that fundamental Law and Rule of Juſtice, *Whatſoever ye would that Men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them*, Mat. vii. 12. Luke vi. 21. According to this Rule he preach'd and acted; whence you hear that Injunction from his bleſſed Mouth which I had Occaſion to mention before, *Render unto Cæſar the Things that are Cæſar's.* And he took Care that the Prieſts ſhould not be defrauded of their Dues, *Go thy Way*, ſaid he to the Man cured of his Leproſy, *and offer the Gift that Moſes commanded*, i. e. pay what the Law requires. It was his Will that all Perſons, of what Quality or Condition ſoever, ſhould be juſtly and uprightly dealt with. And therefore herein we ought to act according to his Will, that is, to do Juſtice to every one we converſe with, to let all Men have their Right and Due, and in our whole Commerce with our Brethren and Neighbours to give Proof of our ſincere Deſire and Endeavours to imitate our Maſter who was a perfect Example of Juſtice.

AND he that was *juſt* was alſo *loving* and *charitable*; yea, every thing that he did was a Proof and Evidence of this latter. He came into the World, he lived in it, he went out of it with Deſigns of Love and Mercy. *Peter* in his Sermon to *Cornelius* and his Company tells them concerning our Saviour, that *he went about doing Good*, Acts x. 38. He ſought abroad for Occaſions of Mercy and Charity, whereas we are loth to embrace thoſe Opportunities which are brought home to us, and lie before our Doors. He went from City to City, from Town to Town with indefatigable Pains, Care and Induſtry. He conſtantly travell'd on Foot, for we read but once of his Riding. Thus *he went about*. It is true St. *James* ſaith of the evil Spirit that *he walks about*, Chap. 5. v. 9. he takes his *Circuit* as well as our Saviour, but to far different Ends and Purpoſes; for, as the Apoſtle there acquaints us, *He walks about, ſeeking whom he may devour*; whereas our bleſſed Lord *went about doing Good*, curing the Diſeaſed, feeding the Hungry, diſpoſſeſſing that devouring Spirit, and being helpful and beneficial where-ever he came. He was made up of Pity and Compaſſion, of Courteſy and Friendſhip, and he ſhew'd himſelf obliging to thoſe Perſons who leaſt deſerv'd theſe from him. He diſmiſs'd the Adultereſs, and ſaved her from the Puniſhment of the Law, that ſhe might go Home, and amend her Life, and eſcape the Puniſhment of Hell. He was frequently kind to Strangers and Enemies; as when the Diſciples would have had him revenge himſelf on the *Samaritans*, who denied him Entertainment as he was paſſing in his Journey, he refuſed to do it, and rebuked their fiery Zeal, ſaying, *Ye know not what Spirit ye are of*, Luke ix. 51. And ſoon after he heal'd a *Samaritan Leper*, among others that came to him, and extoll'd him above all the reſt, Luke xvii. 11. *&c.* That he meditated no Revenge againſt thoſe who ſhew'd themſelves *Enemies* to him, is clear from innumerable Paſſages of his Life that are recorded in the Goſpel, which tells us how forward he was upon all Occaſions to ſhew Kindneſs to any of them. That he incouraged Deeds of Charity is evident from his applauding the Widow who parted with her *two Mites* (which was all her Stock) to the *Corban*, or *Church-Treaſury*, Mark xii. 41. By theſe and ſeveral other Acts of this Nature he teacheth us to be loving and kind-hearted, to be beneficial and advantageous to all we converſe with, and to encourage others to be ſuch. We muſt bear a Love to all Mankind, and be ready to do all kind Offices for their Good, and we ought to rejoice in doing ſo. This is directly oppoſite to *Envy*, which is a ſorrowful Indignation at the Good and Proſperity of others: And generally *Rejoicing* at other Mens Miſchiefs is its Companion.

BUT let your *Love* and *Bounty* be chiefly ſhew'd towards the *Souls* of Men, as Chriſt's was. The evangelical Hiſtory informs us that he fed Mens Bodies and Souls together, but the latter was his greateſt Care. He went about healing the Sick and Diſeaſed, but his main Employ and Practice lay in curing Mens Minds. This double Care was obſervable in the paralytick Perſon mention'd in *John* v. 14. When Chriſt had reſtored Health to his Body, he attempted the Healing of his Soul: Nay, he made the former ſubſervient to the latter, for thus runs that great Phyſicians Bill, *Behold thou art made whole: Sin no more.* And to this excellent Advice he adds the Danger of a Relapſe, *Leſt a worſe thing come unto thee.* Chriſt's Compaſſion both to the Souls and Bodies of Men was evidenced in his Behaviour towards the Inhabitants of *Jeruſalem: He beheld the City, and wept over it*, Luke xix. 41. He truly and really ſhed Tears of Grief and Pity. And therefore we muſt look upon it as a great Miſtake in ſome of the * Antients, who thought that Chriſt was void of all Paſſion, and had no Senſe of Grief. It is expreſly ſaid in the forecited Place that he *wept*, and we are ſure that his Tears proceeded from real Grief; this being given in the Verſes afterwards as the Reaſon of his weeping, becauſe *they underſtood not the things that belong'd to their Peace, and knew not the Time of their Viſitation.* So that at the ſame Time he *mourned* for their Deſtruction which was approaching, and for their Hardneſs of Heart and Impenitence which he foreſaw would bring upon them that Deſtruction.

* Clem. Alexandr. Strom. lib. 6. Hilar. de Trin. l. 10. Nonnus in *Johan.* xi. 35.

AS he lived ſo he died a moſt compaſſionate Lover of Souls. He went out of the World praying for his Perſecutors and Murtherers, deſiring that his *Father would forgive them.* But of that I may more pertinently diſcourſe when I come to propound our Saviour to you as an Example of Patience under his Sufferings. That which I am to remind you of at preſent is, that *Chriſt's Death* is the moſt ſignal Inſtance imaginable of his *Love to Mankind.* There can be no greater Demonſtration of it than this, as he himſelf gives us to underſtand in *John* xv. 13. *Greater Love hath no Man than this, that a Man lay down his Life for his Friends.* And the Apoſtle makes mention of this as an unparallel'd Token of Chriſt's Love to us; *When we were yet without Strength, in due Time Chriſt died for the Ungodly*, ſaith he, *Rom.* v. 6. And then in the next Verſe but one he adds, *God commendeth his Love towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners, Chriſt died for us.* As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, let none call Chriſt's *Love* in Queſtion when he conſiders his *dying* for Sinners: For it is certain that nothing could ſo viſibly *ſet off* and *commend* either the Love of God the Father or of his Son as this doth. This is no other than a royal Act of Grace and Forgiveneſs: For by Chriſt's meritorious Paſſion and Death we are abſolved and acquitted from our Sins. God the Father for the ineſtimable Value and Virtue of his Son's moſt precious Blood is pleas'd to pardon all our Offences, to remit all our Tranſgreſſions, and to receive us into Favour, and to beſtow on us all the Graces of his Holy Spirit.

THUS I have ſet before you the remarkable Inſtances of Chriſt's *Love* to Mankind. We are concern'd to imitate it, not only becauſe this Love in itſelf provokes to Imitation, but becauſe we are bid by Chriſt himſelf to follow him in this particular. *A new Commandment I give unto you*, ſaith he, *that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye alſo love one another*, John xiii. 34. And he repeats this in *chap.* xv. *v.* 12. *This is my Commandment, that ye love* *one another as I have loved you.* Still he propounds *himſelf* as a *Patern* to us: Being a loving Saviour, he calls on us to love one another. And withal he tells us that *by this ſhall all Men know that we are his Diſciples, if we have Love one to another,* John xiii. 35. Mutual Love is the Badge and Cognizance whereby we may be known to be of Chriſt's Retinue. It cannot be rationally thought that we belong to him if we hate one another. The Apoſtle alſo urgeth Chriſt's Example in this particular, *Walk in Love, as Chriſt alſo hath loved you,* Eph. v. 2. More eſpecially he commands that our Love in forgiving one another be conformable to our Saviour's Practice. *As Chriſt even forgave you,* ſaith he, *ſo alſo do ye,* Col. iii. 13. Forgive your Brethren when they offend againſt you, yea, forgive your very Enemies. Make Chriſt's Love a Patern for yours herein. And let me tell you, there is no Virtue in which we can reſemble God and Chriſt more in than this: Which ſhould be an Encouragement to you to practiſe it. It is an antient Saying quoted by *Philo,* † Men never do any thing whereby they approach nearer to God than by freely forgiving, and ſhewing Favour and Kindneſs to one another.

LET us then follow the exemplary Love of our Lord Chriſt Jeſus; and ſeeing this Duty is in ſome Caſes very difficult, let us make Uſe of this admirable Patern to incourage us. O that we might live as thoſe that are Followers and Diſciples of Chriſt, who was the great Maſter of Love and good Will, and came down upon Earth on Purpoſe to give Proofs of them. If we own ourſelves related to the merciful and loving Saviour of the World, who deeply reſented the Miſeries of ſinful Men, whoſe Bowels yearned towards the loſt Race of *Adam,* who ſhed Tears over *Jeruſalem* which not long after ſhed his Blood, we cannot but have a tender and dear Regard to the Souls of Men. If we have the real Impreſſions of Grace on our Hearts, we ſhall be fill'd with Grief and Compaſſion when we take a ſerious View of the deplorable State of Sinners, and we ſhall ſhew our Commiſeration towards them in endeavouring to reclaim them. In Imitation of our dear Maſter we ſhall exerciſe a hearty Love to all Mankind: We ſhall with an univerſal Charity deſire the Welfare of all Men, and reſolve in our Capacities and Stations to effect and procure it. We ſhall *do Good, and communicate,* and diligently promote all Works of Mercy towards the Souls and Bodies of Men. This will be an infallible Evidence to us that we are the true Followers of Chriſt; for the beſt Chriſtians are moſt beneficial to others, and diſcover their hearty Love and Charity to them by all poſſible Ways and Methods.

4. CHRIST is to be imitated by us in his *religious and devout Converſe with God.* For tho' he was of the ſame Nature with his Father, and conſequently was *God himſelf;* yet now in this Diſcourſe we conſider him only as he was *Man,* i. e. as he took upon him our human Nature; and in that Reſpect he perform'd Acts of Devotion and Worſhip to God the Father. He refus'd not to repair to the *Jewiſh* Synagogues (their ordinary Places of divine Worſhip): And tho' I don't read that he communicated with the *Jews* in their Service, yet hereby he teaches us that we ought to take all Occaſions of paying our Reverence and Adoration to the Almighty, and of meeting together to confeſs our Sins, and to praiſe God for his Mercies, and to beg his Bleſſing. Though ſome Doctrines were taught in the Synagogues which ſavour'd of the corrupt Gloſſes of Men, yet becauſe the holy Word of God was read and expounded there, and the Law and Rule of Life were deliver'd from the Prieſt's Lips, Chriſt owned their Meeting together there, and approved of the main Deſign of it, which was to worſhip God, and to inſtruct the People in his Will. And from that Reverence which he bore to the Houſe of God, he was moved with high Indignation when he ſaw the *Temple* abuſed and prophaned by Buyers and Sellers, (though it was not properly the *Temple* they were in, but an Out-part of it only,) yet when he beheld theſe Merchandizers expoſe their Goods to Sale in that Place, he was greatly troubled in his Spirit, and like a true Zealot whipp'd them out thence: And this he did at two ſeveral Paſſovers, as you may ſatisfy yourſelves by conſulting *John* ii. 13. and *Mat.* xxi. 12. The former was at the Paſſover next after his Baptiſm, the latter was five Days before his Paſſion. Yea, long before, when he was but twelve Years of Age, he ſeem'd by thoſe Words in *Luke* ii. 49. to ſignify his Kindneſs and Reſpect

† Παραπλήσιον οὐδὲν ἄνθρωποι Θεῶ δρῶσιν ἢ χαριζόμενοι. De Judice.

Reſpect for the ſolemn Place where God at that Time was worſhip'd, *Wiſt ye not that I muſt be in my Father's Houſe?* Luke ii. 49. For ſo according to the Greek it may be tranſlated, and ſo you'll find it rendred in the Margin of your Bibles. Thus *Origen* and *Theophylact* underſtood theſe Words, *viz.* concerning Chriſt's early Devotion and Regard for the *Temple*, the Place dedicated to God, and become *his Houſe* in a peculiar Manner. Whilſt he was a Child he honoured that Place for the Sake of him to whom it was dedicated: And I have told you how he afterwards made thoſe Perſons feel the Smart of his Indignation who prophaned it by bringing their Wares but into the Confines of it.

AND not only *publick Prayers* and *Worſhip* were obſerved by him, but he was very frequent and ardent in his *private Converſe with God.* You read that *he went out into a Mountain to pray, and continued all Night in Prayer to God,* Luke vi. 12. And his great Sufferings did not abate but inhance his Devotion and pious Spirit, for *being in an Agony, he prayed more earneſtly,* Luke xxii. 44. And obſerve what the Author to the *Hebrews* ſaith of our bleſſed Maſter, namely, that *in the Days of his Fleſh he offer'd up Prayers and Supplications with ſtrong Cryings and Tears,* Heb. v. 7.

AND to Prayer he added Meditation; for it was his uſual Cuſtom to retire from the Multitude, and to be by himſelf alone, and then to contemplate the great Work he was to undertake, and by his private and ſerious converſing with Heaven to prepare himſelf for the accompliſhing of it. Though he was on Earth, yet his Heart was above; he was ſending up his Thoughts to that Place where he was ſhortly to arrive himſelf.

IN theſe things let our dear Lord be our Patern, let us often give ourſelves to Privacy and Retirement, leaving behind us the Noiſe and Buſineſs of the World. It is true, there is a blameable Retirement, there is an affected ſuperſtitious Reſervedneſs: As when Men wholly forſake the World and affect Solitude, and baniſh themſelves from Commerce. But we may ſeparate ourſelves from the World without turning Monks, and ſhutting ourſelves up in Cloiſters. We are not bid to be Anchorites and Eremites, to reſort into Deſarts, and live apart by ourſelves. That which is requir'd of us is only this, that we frequently ſhun the Throng, and retreat from the World, and privately converſe with God and our own Conſciences, and by ſerious Contemplation fit ourſelves for the beatifick Viſion of God above, and by Heavenly-mindedneſs wean ourſelves from the Vanities and Follies of this lower World. But eſpecially when we are alone, let us by earneſt *Prayer* make known our Wants to our heavenly Father. Now is the Time to pour out our Souls before him, to uncaſe our Breaſts, to lay open our Hearts, to rifle the moſt remote Corners of our Conſciences. And when we have finiſh'd this ſecret Work in our Cloſets, the *Family* we live with ſhould partake of our more open Addreſſes to God, that thereby a Bleſſing may be derived upon them daily. For by Prayer we conciliate the divine Favour, we call down the Mercies of Heaven upon us and upon our Relations: When we faithfully perform this Duty, we may aſſure ourſelves of the divine Direction and Aſſiſtance in all our lawful Affairs, and Succeſs in all our religious Undertakings and Enterprizes. But the *publick Prayers* of the Church call for our Attendance likewiſe, eſpecially at more ſolemn Times, and particularly every Lord's Day, when, in the Congregation of God's People, we ought to ſerve him with our united Fervour and Zeal. We cannot be excus'd from reſorting to the publick Devotions, and with joint Affections ſoliciting the divine Goodneſs to beſtow his Grace and good Spirit upon us: In ſhort, our Saviour hath taught us by his own Example how neceſſary this Duty of *Prayer* is, and how fervent we ſhould be in it. Let the Frequency of his Devotion reprove thoſe who preſent themſelves before God ſo ſeldom. Let his ſpending whole Nights in Prayer check thoſe who paſs ſo many Days and Nights without calling upon God. Moreover, let his Zeal and Earneſtneſs in theſe religious Exerciſes reprove our Coldneſs and Remiſsneſs in them. And for the future, let us from ſo eminent an Example ſtrive to be both conſtant and fervent in our religious Approaches to God.

5. *Chriſt's patient and undaunted Deportment under his extraordinary Sufferings,* is to be imitated by us. For we ought to imitate our Saviour, not only in his Doings, but in his Sufferings: When God ſhall think fit to exerciſe us with

Afflictions and Croſſes, there is no Patern like that of Chriſt for us to follow. In the latter Part of his Life, he was wholly expoſed to the ill Will and Malice of his Enemies, who conſtantly reproached and reviled him, injured and abuſed him; and that in the moſt unworthy Manner that can be conceived: But he bore all with unſpeakable Patience, and practiſ'd that which he adviſ'd his Followers to, *viz.* that *they would love their Enemies, do Good to them that hated them, bleſs them that curſed them, and pray for them who deſpitefully uſed them, and perſecuted them*; he forgot Affronts and Obloquies, he paſs'd by Injuries, he ſtudied no Revenge: And even when he aſcended the Croſs, he continued in the ſame peaceable and calm Temper; when their Malice was at the Heighth, his Meekneſs and Patience was ſo too; yea, his Virtues and Graces did ſhine forth brighteſt on the Croſs. He was ſo far from ſhewing any Paſſion and Rage, that he ſilently ſubmitted to their bloody Practices. * *Like a Lamb dumb before the Shearer, ſo opened not he his Mouth.* This admirable Behaviour is thus repreſented to us by St. *Peter*, ſpeaking of the Sufferings of our Saviour, † *Who* (ſaith he) *when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatned not; but committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly.* And when he broke Silence, he expreſſed no Anger or Hatred towards his implacable Adverſaries; but on the contrary, gave an undeniable Demonſtration of his good Will to them, in praying for them; he requeſted his Father to forgive his Crucifiers: When he was commending his Spirit into God's Hands, he forgot not to commend his Murtherers into the ſame Hands of Mercy. A noble Patern for us to follow! If we ſhall be called by our Saviour to follow him to the Croſs, and to Death; let us according to his Example, heartily forgive our greateſt Enemies; whilſt they thirſt after our Blood, let us deſire their Converſion and Salvation; when they poſt us out of this World, let us beg of God, that they may be happy with us in another. Let Chriſt be imitated by us, in our bearing of all Reproaches and Slanders, with a meek and quiet Spirit, in not opening our Mouths in Diſcontent and Impatience, in betaking ourſelves to Praying, and Bleſſing, when we are mocked and reviled, and even curſed; and in diſcovering unſhaken Courage of Mind, under all the Diſgraces and Obloquies, all the Sufferings and Perſecutions which ſhall be our Allotment in our Pilgrimage.

* Acts, viii. 32.

† 1 Pet. ii. 23.

CHRIST's exemplary Patience in ſuch Circumſtances was eſpecially deſigned by him for our Imitation, as he acquaints us himſelf in *Mat.* xvi. 24. *If any Man will come after me, let him* (not only) *deny himſelf,* (but) *take up his Croſs, and follow me:* i. e. Let him endure the Croſs, with that Patience and Meekneſs which he ſees in me. And mark how the Author to the *Hebrews* propounds him, on this very Account, to our Imitation, *Heb.* xii. 1, 2, 3. *Let us* (ſaith he) *run with Patience the Race that is ſet before us, looking unto Jeſus the Author and Finiſher of our Faith, who for the Joy that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the Shame, and is ſet down at the right Hand of the Throne of God. For conſider him that endured ſuch Contradiction of Sinners againſt himſelf, leſt ye be wearied, and faint in your Minds.* The Conſideration of his Sufferings will chear and animate you, eſpecially when you think of this, that it was the Purpoſe of Heaven, that we ſhould be made conformable to Chriſt in thoſe his Sufferings: Wherefore, prepare to ſuffer with Chriſt, to be thruſt out from Communion with the World, and to be deſpiſed and reproached. *There was no Room for him in the Inn,* neither is there any Entertainment and Reception for his ſincere Followers in the World; they are, like him, daily vilified and abhorred, affronted and perſecuted: The vitious World hates their Preſence here, and would exclude them from Heaven, and thoſe eternal Manſions above, if they could. But comfort yourſelves with this, that you are Fellow-Sufferers with Chriſt, you have the Honour to be uſed as he was: Therefore, in your greateſt Diſtreſſes, *look unto Jeſus,* as the Apoſtle here exhorts you; ſet before you his Example, and thereby you will be kept from *fainting in your Minds,* and from ſinking under the Burden be it never ſo heavy. St. *Peter* likewiſe mentions Chriſt's Sufferings to this very Purpoſe, namely, that we may imitate them, or him rather, in his Patient undergoing of them: *He ſuffered for us,* (ſaith this Holy Writer) *leaving us an Example, that we ſhould follow his Steps,* 1 Epiſt. Chap. ii. Ver. 21. He is our *Copy to write after,* (as that || Greek Word which is here rendered *Example* properly ſignifies:) What remains then, but that we endeavour to *tranſcribe*

|| ὑπάγραμμον,

ſcribe this Original, that we follow Chriſt, in ſuffering for a good Cauſe, and for Righteouſneſs ſake, and that we rejoice and be exceeding glad, that ſo great an Honour is conferred upon us?

6thly, and *laſtly*, To compriſe all, our Saviour's conſtant Beating down of Sin and Vice, and his Encouraging and Promoting of Holineſs, by all that he ſaid or did, are moſt worthy of our Imitation. Was there ever a more eminent Reprover of Sin than our Lord Chriſt, who (as we read) openly and frequently rebuked the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, though they were topping Men among the *Jews*, though they were the moſt noted for Learning, and were of the greateſt Eſteem and Repute among the People? Yet he freely inveighed againſt the Miſcarriages of theſe Men, he corrected the Errors and Corruptions of their Doctrine, and ſeverely chaſtiſed the Wickedneſs of their Manners: Even when he was kindly received and entertained at a Dinner, by one of the *Phariſees*, he forbore not to take Notice of their ſuperſtitious Uſages; and ſmartly check'd not only their Hypocriſy, but their other groſs Sins, which he knew them guilty of: *The Lord ſaid unto him, Now do ye Phariſees make clean the outſide of the Cup and the Platter, but your inward Part is full of Ravening and Wickedneſs*, Luke, xi. 39. And in the † following Verſes, he more particularly inſiſts upon their formal and hypocritical Way of living, *Wo unto you, Phariſees, for ye tithe Mint and Rue, and all manner of Herbs, and paſs over Judgment and the Love of God:* i. e. You make a Shew of Religion in ſome leſſer Things, but wholly forget thoſe that are greater, and are of indiſpenſible Concern. *Wo unto you, Phariſees, for you love the uppermoſt Seats in the Synagogues, and Greetings in the Markets:* i. e. Though you pretend to great Humility, yet you are Men of a very haughty Spirit, and affect Honour and Applauſe from Men; and hereby (as well as by other Things) ſhew yourſelves to be great Hypocrites. *Wo unto you, Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites; for ye are as Graves, which appear not, and the Men that walk over them, are not aware of them:* i. e. You are guilty of Falſneſs and Diſſembling, and thereby deſtroy many Souls, and are deſtroyed your ſelves. In another Place he tells theſe Men, what their Parentage is, he freely blazons their Pedigree, *Ye are of your Father the Devil, for his Works ye will do.* Was there ever any Thing ſaid, that could be more downright and plain, and void of Flattery? Did ever any one lay open theſe Mens Faults after this Manner?

† ver. 42, 43, 44.

And the notorious Vices of the *Publicans*, and other ſcandalous Sinners, he reproved with great Freedom and Earneſtneſs; yea, when he ſat with *Publicans* and *Sinners*, and convers'd with hainous Offenders, it was with this Deſign, that he might reclaim and reduce them to the Ways of Godlineſs and Righteouſneſs, by having an Opportunity of ſpeaking familiarly to them, and inculcating his holy Admonitions, and Advice.

Here I might repreſent the whole Scope of his *Sermons*, *Diſcourſes*, and *Conferences*, which were always levell'd againſt the Sins and Enormities of Men, and which corrected thoſe falſe Gloſſes and Interpretations put on the Law; whereby ſeveral pernicious Opinions and Doctrines, many evil and unlawful Practices, were foſter'd and defended. He ſpent all his Time, after he had ſtept forth into the World, in inſtructing and reforming it; he took all Occaſions to inform Mens Minds; and from earthly and common Objects, he diſcours'd of heavenly and ſpiritual Ones, of which we have ſeveral Inſtances in the evangelical Hiſtory: He conferred with his Diſciples in private, as well as publickly preached to them; he was always inſpiring Men with true Notions of Things, and directing them about the great Buſineſs of their Salvation: Nor would he be impeded by any Avocations, which it is probable is the Meaning of thoſe Words of his, *Touch me not*, John xx. 17. that is, hang not about me, ſo as to hinder me, who am full of Employment before I go to my Father. He endeavoured on all Occaſions to diſgrace Vice and Immorality, and to render them odious and abominable. Wherever he went, he let the World ſee that it was his Deſign to deſtroy the Works of the Devil, and to beat down his Kingdom and Intereſt; and at the ſame time, to exalt the Kingdom of God, to commend univerſal Righteouſneſs, and to cauſe it to flouriſh among Men.

We ought then in theſe, (as in the foregoing Particulars) to imitate our Lord and Saviour, to inform Men aright concerning the neceſſary Articles of Religion, to remove their falſe Notions and Apprehenſions, to declare the Will of God to them, to acquaint them with the Worth and Excellency of Chriſtianity. We are obliged alſo to reprove Vice and Wickedneſs, where-ever we eſpy it, to check and curb all manner of Sin, eſpecially to be very ſevere in rebuking thoſe vitious Practices, which we ſee are moſt prevalent, and which may juſtly be reckoned *the Sins of the Times*. Theſe we muſt continually remonſtrate againſt, with great Reſolution and Boldneſs withſtand: We muſt dare to appear againſt the crying Vices of the Age, leſt they become ours, by our Silence and Connivance, by our ſitting ſtill, and ſuffering them to go on uncontroled. In ſhort, we muſt bear up couragiouſly againſt the wicked Enterprizes of hardned and impudent Sinners; we muſt labour to ſtem the Torrent of Impiety and Prophaneneſs, which is broken in upon us; we muſt both by our Words and Actions give a Powerful Check to the lewd Diſorders that are amongſt us, and by all the prudent Methods we can uſe, ſtrive to ſet up and maintain the Kingdom of Chriſt Jeſus in the Hearts and Lives of Men. So much for the firſt general Head of our Diſcourſe, *viz. Wherein* we are to follow Chriſt's Example. I have preſented you with the main Inſtances, in which you are to do it; and whatever *elſe* you meet with, in the Hiſtory of our Saviour's Life and Actions, may eaſily be referred to Theſe.

II. In the next Place, I am to offer to you the *Reaſons* why we are to imitate our Lord Jeſus: The firſt and grand Reaſon, which I ſhall enlarge upon, is this; Chriſt's Example is the exacteſt that we can follow. Here I will ſuggeſt theſe three Things, 1. Some *Examples* are *feign'd*. 2. Thoſe that are true are *imperfect*. 3. The compleateſt, that we can have, are no further imitable than as they are *conformable to Chriſt's Patern.*

1. I say, ſome Examples of Virtue and Holineſs, propounded to us, are feigned and counterfeit. The *Papiſts* impiouſly and blaſphemouſly take St. *Francis* to be the exact Image of Chriſt: There is a Book to that Purpoſe, [entituled *The Conformity of St. Francis*,] which makes him in all Points parallel with our Saviour; and you may read in their *Legends* of other Perſons, who were canoniz'd Saints, for the prodigious Holineſs of their Lives: But we have reaſon to believe, that moſt of theſe were invented, to cheat and delude the People, to bring them to a Liking of their *Superſtitions*, whilſt they tell them, they were the Practice of ſuch auſtere and mortified Men, who would do nothing amiſs; as alſo to foſter the Doctrine of *Merit* and *Supererogation*, and at laſt to exclude the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which is the Foundation of all Holineſs. Beſides, theſe monſtrous Stories of their Saints are made on purpoſe to ſhut out the *Reading of the Holy Scriptures*, where the true Saints of God are faithfully repreſented, and their pious Acts ſincerely ſet down, and where the Life of Jeſus is fully recorded; the Obſerving and Following of which would deſtroy the ſuperſtitious and idolatrous Practices of thoſe Men, who entertain the People with theſe legendary Lies, and forged Narratives of the Saints. Theſe then are not to be our Paterns; but from this we ſee, what *Reaſon* there is to make *Chriſt* our Patern, namely, becauſe his Example, which is propoſed to us, is no Fiction, his Life is no Legend, his Actions are no feigned Story.

2. The Examples of thoſe Saints, that are true and real, are very ſhort and imperfect, and oftentimes mixed with ſinful Miſcarriages; and therefore not the fitteſt to be followed by us. The Holy Scripture relates *Noah*'s Drunkenneſs, *Lot*'s Inceſt, *David*'s Murther and Adultery, *Peter*'s denial of his Maſter, the reſt of the Apoſtles Faint-heartedneſs, and running away at Chriſt's Crucifixion; and the beſt and holieſt Men are reported in the Sacred Hiſtory, to have had ſome groſs Faults, ſome very foul Blemiſhes. The faireſt Copy here hath its Blots, the moſt eminent Saints their Errors and Failings. Chriſt alone is an unblemiſhed Patern of Holineſs, an unſpotted Mirrour of Virtue and Piety, of Innocence and Sanctity; * *He did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth:* Therefore, there is no ſuch Example as that of Chriſt. * 2 Pet. ii. 22.

3. The Examples of the beſt of Men are only ſo far imitable by us, as they are conſormable to the Example of Chriſt: Hence you hear the Apoſtle thus ſpeaking to the *Corinthians*, † *Be ye Followers of me, even as I am of Chriſt*, and no further, and on no other Condition. The Paterns of the beſt Men muſt be referr'd to this one Patern, and to be adjuſted to this: I grant, that next to our Saviour's Example, we may look upon the Lives of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, of all the Prophets and holy Men, recorded in the Sacred Writ; we † 1 Cor. xi. 1.

may and ought to follow the Martyrs and Confeſſors, who ſerved Chriſt in Hunger and Thirſt, in Cold and Nakedneſs, in Watching, Faſting, and Prayer; but we muſt follow theſe no farther than they walked according to the bleſſed Example which Chriſt hath ſet us of well-doing and patient Suffering. The Clock goes right when it is ſet by the Sun. Then the Lives of God's Servants are ſuch as you may ſafely follow, when they are directed by the unerring Life of Chriſt: Which ſhews that he is the only abſolute Patern, and conſequently that his Example far excels all others. *He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.* If you follow him you ſhall not *ſtray*, you ſhall not be *deceived*, you ſhall *live eternally.* If all the Examples of Virtue were loſt, here they might be recover'd and found in this one, this excellent and incomparable Syſtem of all Virtue and Goodneſs. You ſee the *Reaſon* then why this is propounded to you before all others, namely, becauſe (as one rightly ſaith) * It is Folly to offer thoſe Examples to Mens Imitation which are not the beſt in their Kind. I have ſet this before you becauſe it is the *exacteſt Patern*, the *moſt compleat Exemplar* of all Grace and Holineſs. In imitating this you are ſure to reſemble God, and to tranſcribe the very Deity.

THERE are ſeveral *other Reaſons*, which I will but briefly touch upon. Secondly then, it was the *Deſign* and *Purpoſe of God* in ſending his Son into the World, that he ſhould be an Example to us. Chriſt was given that Men might follow him, or (as an antient Father expreſſeth it well) † That Men might have the unchangeable Righteouſneſs of the divine Word to be the Image and Patern of Virtue to them. Man loſt his primitive Integrity and Uprightneſs, and hereupon we ſtand in need of one to ſupply that Defect by giving us an exact Example of Purity and Righteouſneſs. Chriſt therefore came to give us ſuch an Example: And it is our Duty to imitate it according to our Power and Capacity; otherwiſe we fruſtrate the *divine Intention* for the good of degenerate Mankind.

Thirdly, THIS is the *great Character* of Chriſtianity, and the main thing whereby we are able to demonſtrate ourſelves to be true Chriſtians. *He that ſaith, he abideth in Chriſt, ought himſelf alſo to walk even as he walked*, 1 John ii. 6. If we call ourſelves Chriſtians, we are obliged to follow Chriſt: For that of St. *Auguſtin* is undeniable, to *imitate* him whom we worſhip is the true Notion of being *religious*, and it doth as truly expreſs the Nature of a Diſciple of the *beſt Religion* in the World, which is the *Chriſtian.* We miſerably flatter and abuſe ourſelves when we pretend to Chriſtianity, and yet walk not like the Founder of that Religion. If we be true Chriſtians we ſhall certainly expreſs the Life of Chriſt in all our Actions, in our whole Deportment in the World: For this is the inſeparable Badge of the chriſtian Inſtitution to follow the Example of our Maſter.

Fourthly, YOU are obliged to this by Reaſon of the *Command* of Chriſt and his Apoſtles. He often chargeth his Diſciples (as I ſhew'd you) to do as he did. And the Apoſtles inculcate it earneſtly in their Writings that we ought to take Chriſt for our Example, and to tread in his Steps. If theſe ſacred Injunctions be of any Force with you, you will ſhew yourſelves obedient Chriſtians by living as Chriſt lived.

Fifthly, THE *Relation* that we ſtand in to him requires this of us. He is ſtiled in Scripture our King, and we are his Subjects; *the Captain of our Salvation*, and we are his Soldiers; our *Maſter* and we are his Servants; our *Head*, and we are his Members. All theſe Relations do naturally and neceſſarily imply that it is our Duty to follow him, to do as he doth, and in every thing to be conformable to his Example.

Sixthly, I COULD add that *this* is it which *adorneth* our Profeſſion, and *graceth* our Religion; this brings Repute to Chriſtianity, and renders it honourable and Praiſe-worthy. What can be ſaid more to the Credit of that Perſon who profeſſeth himſelf a Chriſtian than this, that he ſpeaks and acts, and behaves himſelf as Chriſt did? Our Lord when he was on Earth was exceeding humble and condeſcending: He was famous for his Self-denial and Mortification: He was juſt and righteous in all his Dealings: He was a Perſon of univerſal Love and Charity. And in thoſe Offices of Religion, which have

Reference

* Stultiſſimum credo ad imitandum non optima quæque proponere. Plin.

† ἵνα τὸν ἀμετάβλητον τῆς τοῦ Λόγου δικαιοσύνης ἔχωσιν εἰκόνα, καὶ τύπον πρὸς ἀρετὴν οἱ ἄνθρωποι. Athanaſ. Orat. 2.

Reference to God as well as Men, he was obſerv'd to be very exact: He was remarkable for his Piety and Devotion, and conſtant Converſe with Heaven. His meek and patient Deportment under the Croſs was admirable. And laſtly, he was both in Life and Death an utter Enemy to all Sin and Vice, and indeavour'd by all Means to pull down Satan's Kingdom. This is the brief but true Pourtraiture of the holy Jeſus. And nothing can make Religion ſo *illuſtrious* as framing our Manners according to this Image.

Laſtly, To ſum up all, this is that which yields us ſolid Comfort, and gives us ſure and certain Hopes of eternal Happineſs; for if we reſemble our Lord in his Virtues and Graces, we ſhall alſo be like him in Glory. Thus on all Accounts you are obliged to *imitate Chriſt*. Having proved this, I proceed to the next and laſt Part of my Diſcourſe, which is

III. The *Application* of all that hath been ſaid.

1. Ask yourſelves ſeriouſly whether you have ſet Chriſt's Example before you, and have endeavour'd to imitate it. I have given you a ſhort Draught of Chriſt's Life: Now ſee that you compare your Lives with his. Are you Maſters of that Humility which he ſhew'd through his whole Life? Are you juſt and honeſt in all your Dealings with your Brethren? Do you know what Tender heartedneſs, Charity and brotherly Love are? Do you contentedly forgive Injuries? Are you meek and patient under Reproaches and Perſecutions? Do you love to converſe with God by Prayer and all other holy Exerciſes of Religion? Do you deny yourſelves, and your own Will, and ſubmit wholly to God's? Do you delight in doing Good, and living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godlily? Do you ſmartly reprove and rebuke the contrary in others? Do you make it your great Work and Buſineſs to promote Chriſt's Kingdom, and to weaken that of Satan? Thus examine yourſelves, and be very ſerious in this Enquiry, for on this depends a Matter of the greateſt Moment, namely, your being like unto Chriſt: Which if you can experience in yourſelves, you are the happieſt Perſons that breathe. But

2. Let us lament both in ourſelves and others the great Defect which may be found as to theſe things; let us unfeignedly bemoan our Neglect of taking Chriſt for our Example. Alas! what do we ſee in the World? How contrary are Mens Practices to that which I have been commending to you? Inſtead of following the beſt Example they chooſe out the worſt: The Manners of the *vileſt Sort of Men* are moſt admired and followed by them. Their Prophaneneſs, their Debauchery, their Whoredoms, and all the moſt ſcandalous Vices which they obſerve in them, are greedily imitated by them. Nay, they ſo groſly degenerate that even *Beaſts* are often made their Examples, which they too apparently diſcover in acting againſt Reaſon, in wallowing in their Luſts and Senſuality, and in indulging a brutiſh and ſottiſh Life. Nay farther, I muſt add that a great Part of Mankind ſtudy to reſemble the *Devil*, namely, in his Hatred and Envy, his Malice and Revenge, his implacable Cruelty, and Deſigns of ruining Mens Souls.

But O how little is the bleſſed Jeſus imitated by us! How unlike are our Lives to his? What an inconſiderable Reſemblance is there between the one and the other? Nay, how contrary are our Lives to the Example of Chriſt our Lord? He was humble, but we nouriſh Pride and Arrogance: He was a great Maſter of Self-denial, but we ſeek ourſelves: He was beneficial in the World, but how little Good do we do in it? He was pious and devout, and heavenly-minded, but we grovel on the Earth, and are carnal and ſenſual. He underwent his Sufferings with invincible Courage and Patience, but we droop and ſink when a light Affliction attacks us. He made it his Work to baffle the evil Spirit and deſtroy his Kingdom, whereas we oftentimes take Part with that Enemy of our Souls, and thereby promote his Intereſt in the World. This is the ſad Account of moſt Mens Lives, which we ought heartily to lament. Would any one who ſees the Generality of Mens Lives think that they have the Example of Chriſt ſet before them? It was truly ſaid by *Valer. Maximus* that * it is a Shame a Man ſhould have the beſt and choiceſt Paterns before his Eyes, and yet act but *meanly* and *ordinarily*, and ſcarcely ſo. But then is it not a greater Shame that Men ſhould have the moſt excellent Examples in their View, and yet act quite *contrary* to them?

* Excellentiſſima animadvertenti, nè mediocria quidem præſtare, rubori oportet eſſe. Lib. 4. c. 6.

This is the Caſe of common Chriſtians: Inſtead of *imitating*, they *oppoſe* Chriſt; inſtead of following his Example, they run counter to it. Let this deeply affect us, let this beget Grief and Anguiſh, Shame and Confuſion in us.

3. LET this Grief and Shame lead us to our Duty, that is, to the Practice of what I have offer'd to you, namely that you would tread in the Steps of your dear Lord, and induſtriouſly follow his Example. Here let me addreſs myſelf to all Sorts of Sinners. Let the proud Man come down from his Heighths, and learn Humility and Meekneſs from the Example of our Saviour. Let the unmerciful and cruel be won upon by his Practice to ſhew Kindneſs and Love to all he converſes with. Let the angry and furious Perſon lay aſide his inordinate Heats, and be inſtructed from the Example of Chriſt's Self-denial to moderate his Paſſions. Let the irreligious and prophane Man learn hence to be zealous and devout, to converſe with God and pray unto him with great Fervency and Affection. Let the ſenſual and carnal Man reform his Life from contemplating our Saviour who indulged himſelf in none of the ſinful Pleaſures of the Fleſh. Let the Man who repines and murmurs under his Sufferings be taught Submiſſion and Patience from thoſe Virtues which were ſo eminent in our Lord. Laſtly, let all of us aſſume from Chriſt's Example a better Temper and a better Life. This is the thing which I am to urge upon you, that you would carefully frame your Actions according to the Patern which Chriſt hath given you. And this you muſt do eſpecially when you have a *preſent Temptation* lying on you, and when you are about any *holy Enterprize*.

Firſt, MAKE uſe of Chriſt's Example to repel the *Temptation* that you are under. As, when you are tempted to Pride, think how humble a Saviour you had. When you are tempted to deal unjuſtly, to cheat and defraud, to oppreſs and grind the Faces of the Poor, reflect on Chriſt's Example, and conſider how juſt and upright he was in all his Dealings with Men, and hated all Wrong and Oppreſſion. When you find yourſelves greatly allured by the Pleaſures of the Taſte, and are enticed to Luxury and Intemperance, to Gluttony and Drunkenneſs, allay your extravagant Appetites and Deſires by calling to mind what a ſevere Obſerver of Temperance and Sobriety the holy Jeſus was all his Life: When Luſt and laſcivious Thoughts rage in your Breaſts, ſet before you the pure, chaſt and ſpotleſs Life of Chriſt. When you are tempted by Hopes of Wealth and Gain to perpetrate ſome baſe Action, quell the Temptation by conſidering the Meanneſs and Poverty of our Saviour, and how he generouſly deſpiſed the Riches and Treaſures of this World. When Applauſe and Vain-Glory puff you up, cure this Swelling by thinking ſeriouſly how our bleſſed Maſter lived above the Temptations of Honour and Grandeur. When you perceive yourſelves liable to Anger, and a Love of Revenge, appeaſe theſe helliſh Paſſions from the Conſideration of Chriſt's meek and placid Temper, and of his admirable Behaviour on the Croſs, where he frankly forgave his Enemies, and pray'd for them. When you find yourſelves like to be overborn with Impatience and Diſcontent, cure this Malady by remembring how patiently and contentedly Chriſt underwent all his Sufferings. Laſtly, in all your *Temptations* call to Mind that Chriſt was tempted, and that in an extraordinary Manner, but was more than Conqueror. Beg of God that by Virtue derived from the ſame Spirit you may be inabled to repel the Aſſaults of the Devil, and alſo to reſemble Chriſt in this as well as in the foregoing Acts of Virtue. Hitherto I have ſhewn you how you are to make Uſe of the Example of Chriſt in *Temptation*.

2dly, YOU muſt alſo ſet this before you *when you are to enterprize any virtuous Action*. It is † *Plutarch*'s Advice, that when we undertake any thing we ſhould have in our View the Examples of brave Men; and think what would *Plato* have done in this Caſe, what would *Epaminondas* have ſaid here, how would *Lycurgus* or *Ageſilaus* have behaved themſelves. And *Seneca* gives the like Rule for the due ordering of Mens Manners: He would have them bear in their Minds the Examples (yea, fancy the very Preſence) of *Socrates* or *Cato*, of *Ariſtides* or *Phocion*, of the *Curii*, the *Fabritii*, or the *Camilli*, who were eminent Precedents of Virtue and Honeſty among the *Pagans*. But behold, a greater than *Socrates* or *Cato* is here, one far ſurmounting all thoſe Worthies whom the *Gentile* Moraliſts commended to the World. Behold the

† De profectu virtutis.

Lord of Life and Glory! Behold the immaculate Jeſus, who was ſent from Heaven to be a Patern to Mankind! Look unto him, whatever Action you are about, whatever Enterprize you have in Hand: Aſk yourſelves what *he* would have done in ſuch Circumſtances, think how *he* would have behaved himſelf. And if you are ſatisfied that your Lord would have done thus in the like Caſe, then queſtion not but it is your Duty to do the ſame. Go about it forthwith, and be not diſcouraged from acting; for if you act as Chriſt did, you cannot do amiſs: He never did any thing that was Blame-worthy, yea all that he did was exactly conformable to the Will of God. Beſides, can there be any higher Wiſdom than to follow his Example who was the Wiſdom of the Father, who was a Perſon of infinite Worth and Excellency, and who was the moſt accompliſhed Patern of Holineſs that ever was? Be not afraid then to imitate him, ſcruple not to be like the Son of God. But ever imagine Chriſt Jeſus ſpeaking to you as *Gideon* to his Soldiers, *Look on me, and do likewiſe:* For his Actions are our Inſtruction, his Life is our Rule. Remember that thou art a *Chriſtian*, and what that ſignifies, namely to live as Chriſt did. Therefore at all Times ſet him before you, look on him in Adverſity and Proſperity, when you are in private, and when you are in Company, when you converſe with God and when you deal with Men; in all your Thoughts, Speeches, Deſires, and Actions follow the Steps of Chriſt: In a Word, both in Life and Death make him your Patern.

TO further you in ſo important a Buſineſs as this is, take theſe two Directions,

1. OFTEN conſult and peruſe the holy Life and Death of Jeſus, as they are recorded by the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles. Frequently turn over thoſe ſacred Leaves, which give you a full Account of him whom you are to imitate. Men are deſirous to view the *Lives* of others, to know what Perſons have been in the World, and how they behaved themſelves. To this Purpoſe ſeveral Writers have attempted to gratify our Curioſity, and have made it their Buſineſs to repreſent to us the Lives of worthy Men. Some * of old, and others of late (both † Foreigners and of § our own Country) have travell'd in this Subject. To know the great and famous Men that have lived in every Age is very acceptable and grateful to ingenious Spirits. And ſhall we not then acquaint ourſelves with the Life and Actions of him who was both God and Man, and whoſe ſinleſs Life caſts a Blemiſh and Darkneſs on the brighteſt Actions of the beſt Men that ever lived on the Earth? And where can we meet with a perfect Pourtraiture of this ſpotleſs Jeſus but in the evangelical Writings?

THERE are great Miſtakes and Follies obſervable in the Writings which give an Account of the Lives and Behaviour of the moſt eminent Men. The *Heathen* Poets repreſented their *Heroes* and great Men very ill ſometimes, and ſo brought Vice into Faſhion by giving ſuch unbecoming Characters of thoſe Perſons. Yea, they introduced their *Gods* in their Poems committing Rapes and Thefts, and doing all Manner of Wickedneſs: Which was the Reaſon why *Plato* would have the *Poets* Writings diſuſed in his Common-wealth. But in theſe ſacred Records of the new Teſtament Chriſt, God-Man, is repreſented like himſelf: We have his whole Life written and deliver'd by an infallible Spirit, and there is no Part of the Narrative but what commands our firmeſt Aſſent. In *Lentulus*'s Letter to *Tiberius*, Chriſt is deſcribed as to the Stature and Colour of his Body; and ſome ſpurious Writers have buſied themſelves about things of this Nature. But in theſe inſpired Records thoſe things are chiefly regiſtred which are of greater Concern to us, *viz.* the ſingular Endowments, the gracious Speeches, the pious Enterprizes, the holy Actions, the reſplendent Virtues and Graces, and the exemplary Carriage and Behaviour of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. Some might be apt to think, when they view the Lives and Manners of ſome Chriſtians, that Chriſt, from whom they take their Name, and of whom they boaſt, was intemperate, proud, given to Anger, unjuſt, uncharitable, *&c.* But thoſe that read the Writings of the Goſpel will find there is no Reaſon to imagine any ſuch thing; but that on the contrary the Life of Chriſt was void of all Sin, and that he was an abſolute Example of all Virtue and Goodneſs. You are concern'd then to read and revolve this holy Book, that thereby you may frequently converſe with the Actions of Chriſt

* *Plutarch, Diogenes Laertius,* &c.

† *Melchior Adam,* &c.

§ *Bale, Leland, Pitts, Godwin, Fuller, Walton.*

Jeſus, that you may have a true and unprejudiced Idea of him, that all the remarkable Paſſages of his Life may be imprinted on your Minds, and that you may expreſs them in the whole Courſe of your Lives.

2. Be convinced of the matchleſs Excellency and Beauty of Chriſt, account him *the Chiefeſt among ten Thouſands*, and dearly love him above all, and this will certainly make you *imitate* him. For *Plato* was in the right when he defined *Love* by *Aſſimilation.* This noble Affection makes us *like* to the Object beloved. He that loves any Perſon will ſtrive to reſemble him, and to conform all his Actions to his. May we not obſerve that Men fondly imitate and even ape thoſe whom they love and highly eſteem? nay, they imitate their very Defects and Failings. So they tell us that *Plato*'s Scholars counterfeited his Stooping in the Shoulders; and becauſe *Ariſtotle* ſometimes ſtammer'd, his Diſciples would needs do ſo when they were in his School. So *Porcius Latro* grew very pale with eating of Cumming-ſeed, and thence the young Frie which he bred up was always nibbling on the ſame, that they might look as wan as their Maſter. And ſeveral other Inſtances there are to prove how eaſily Perſons are drawn into a *fond Imitation* of thoſe that they are well affected to. But they that imitate theſe Imperfections in them, do it for the Sake of the Perfections and Excellencies which they behold in thoſe Men, and which more eſpecially command their Imitation, becauſe they are lovely. Be enamoured then with the infinite and adorable Excellencies of Chriſt Jeſus, which are not mix'd and ſullied with any Imperfections and Blemiſhes, and love him above Meaſure: Then you will delight to imitate him, your Actions will exactly anſwer to his. You will wait upon him and continually look towards him as the magnetick Needle towards the North-point. Love will enable you to bring yourſelf to his Likeneſs, and to make it your grand Aim and Deſign to be conformable to him. Love will cauſe his Image to be exactly drawn on your Souls: Love will effectually impower you to follow ſo glorious an Example as he hath left us of a holy Life: To conclude, Love will make your whole Life to be one entire *Imitation of Chriſt*.

DISCOURSES
AND
TREATISES
ON
Particular GRACES *and* DUTIES.

FIRST,

Thoſe that are contain'd in the EIGHT

BEATITUDES

In our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount.

HAVING diſcours'd of *General Graces* and *Duties*, I proceed to treat of thoſe that are *particular* and *ſpecial*, namely,

I. Thoſe that are contain'd in the *Eight Beatitudes.*
II. *Chriſtian Circumſpection*, with *Wiſdom*, and *redeeming the Time.*
III. The Duties of ſuch as have the *Charge of Families.*
IV. *Self-Denial.*
V. *Patience*, or *Submiſſion.*
VI. *Zeal.*
VII. *Growth in Grace.*
VIII. *Perfection.*
IX. *Perſeverance.*
X. Duties that reſpect our Behaviour, *preparatory to Death.*

I begin with the particular Virtues and Graces which are mention'd in the *Beatitudes.*

A DIS-

A DISCOURSE OF BLESSEDNESS or HAPPINESS,

Preparatory to the ſeveral Diſcourſes on the BEATITUDES.

PSAL. lxxiii. 25.

Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? And there is none upon Earth that I deſire beſides Thee.

Of HAPPINESS, *or the* CHIEF GOOD *of Man.*

THIS is the grand Queſtion in which we are all concern'd, *Who will ſhew us any Good?* Who will favour us ſo much as to acquaint us with the Scene of real *Happineſs*, and tell us how we ſhall not fail to find it? Who will conduct us to ſo worthy an Attainment? How ſhall we arrive to the Poſſeſſion of it? This is the univerſal Cry, and general Voice of Mankind. All the World is in a hot Purſuit after the *chief Good*, this is that which every one deſires and asks after, which every one covets, and would embrace. The Great * *Plato*, treating of the Nature of *Love*, makes it a Deſire, implanted in all Men, to arrive to that *Good* which will make them *happy*. All Mankind are moved and acted by this in *general*, they endeavour to avoid Miſery and to acquire Felicity. This End is naturally purſu'd by them, though they differ as to the *particular* and *determinate* Nature of Happineſs, and where 'tis to be found. And the *Platoniſts*, conformably to their Maſter's Notion, tell us that † the Deſire of Good is common to all Men, and is kindled in the Nature of all Mankind. It is rightly obſerv'd by one of them, that ** though Men differ generally in other Things, yet herein they agree, namely, to proſecute that Good which they all love, but they do it in various and different Ways. The pious Father, St. *Auguſtine*, hath expreſſed this as fully as any, tho' in very ſuccinct Terms: * This is certain, ſaith he, that we would all of us live happily; nor is there any one of the whole Race of Mankind that doth not yield his Conſent to this Determination, even before it is fully utter'd. All Men are unanimous in this Acknowledgment, and 'tis the only Point in which there are found no Diſſenters.

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* In Sympoſ.

† Κοινὸς μὲν πᾶσιν ὁ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ πόθος —— Ἐνέφυσε γάρ τι ὁ Θεὸς ζώπυρον τῷ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένει τῆς προσδοκίας τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ. Max. Tyr. Diſſert. 19.

** Οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἑτέρῳ ὁμολογεῖ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων, ἀλλὰ πάντες ἔρωτος κοινωνοῦντες ἑνὸς τοῦ πρὸς τὸ ἀγαθὸν, ἵενται πολλὰς καὶ παντοδαπὰς ὁδοὺς. Ibid.

YET, notwithſtanding this, there is nothing in which Mankind is ſo much miſtaken, as in their Sentiments about Happineſs; and the direful Effects of it are to be obſerv'd every where in the Life of Man. The World runs mad after Riches, Honours and Pleaſures; Men are eager and reſtleſs in their Purſuit of theſe as their utmoſt Felicity. He that had obſerv'd before, that there is a common Deſire and thirſting after Good in all Men; yet adds, that they all fall ſhort of it, and † *one Man no more than another attains to it.* This, and nothing elſe, ſaith he, is the Cauſe of all the Evils that happen to Men, of all the wild Ranges and Sallies in their Lives, namely, ** *Becauſe they hope for Good, and yet are ignorant of it*; or, as he expreſſes it in another Place, †† *Inſtead of Good, they follow Evil, with an Opinion that it is Good:* As counterfeit Coin is taken for good Money. In brief, all run after that which they fancy to be Good, and are deluded, becauſe they pitch on that which is not their true Happineſs.

THIS was, and is to this Day, the Practice of the degenerate World, and there is no Remedy againſt it but *Chriſtianity.* For it is the great End of the Chriſtian Inſtitution to inform us about the true Nature of Happineſs, to acquaint us wherein it conſiſts, and to direct us to the true Way of attaining it. Indeed, it hath been the Aim of all Models of Religion to do this. You could not havs incens'd a *Jew* by any thing more than by quarrelling with his *Law*, as an imperfect and inſufficient Guide to his אשרי דטוב (as he calls it) his *Chief Good* and *Happineſs.* And indeed it were no Wonder to ſee him grow choleric upon ſuch an Affront as that is, for one would rationally think, that if that Religion, which was the Invention of Heaven itſelf, and the very Draught of Divinity was not able to direct them to, and aſſure them of the chiefeſt Good, they might deſpair of finding it in any other. Nor were the *Pagan* Philoſophers leſs proud of their *Summum Bonum,* though they ſeldom could agree about it, and tell us what it is. The Followers of *Mahomet* likewiſe pretend to direct their Diſciples to the Acquiſition of Happineſs, in the zealous Obſervation of thoſe Rites and Laws which their Prophet preſcrib'd them, and in the Fruition of a ſenſual and carnal Paradiſe.

BUT as to the *Jews,* there was this thing defective in their Happineſs, that it was incloſ'd with dark Types and Shadows, and that the Meſſiah, who only could render it clear and perfect, was not then come. As to the *Pagans,* they had wilfully corrupted and perverted their Sentiments of the chief Good by their vicious and idolatrous Practices. And who can expect that the deluded *Mahometans* ſhould fix on true Happineſs, when they make it conſiſt in Obſervances, not only *Jewiſh,* but *Heatheniſh* (for their Religion is made up of both theſe) and place even their Heaven in corporal and fleſhly Enjoyments? It is JESUS alone that hath founded a Religion which is both Bleſſedneſs itſelf, and the Way to it; a Religion, in the Obſervation of which, we are ſure to have Eaſe and Repoſe to our Minds, and Satisfaction to our moſt enlarged Deſires, and uninterrupted Fruition of the moſt refin'd and exalted Pleaſures that Man's Nature is capable of; a Religion wherein our Intereſt is involv'd, and which we muſt neceſſarily embrace and love, if we hate not ourſelves, Happineſs being entail'd upon it.

I HAVE two Reaſons eſpecially, to perſuade us, that the *Chriſtian Religion* cannot poſſibly be defective in this grand Buſineſs, namely, the Diſcovery of *True Happineſs*; Firſt, becauſe it can't rationally be ſuppoſ'd that it ſhould fail us in that which is the main Object, and Attractive of our Deſires, and to which all others are but ſubordinate. If we ſhould be left to ſail here without Card or Compaſs, our Caſe would be unſpeakably perillous, and nothing but a fatal Shipwreck could be expected. The End that a Man propounds to himſelf in his Religion is to be happy; and if the Scheme of it doth not inform him what that Happineſs is, it is utterly in vain to look for it any where elſe.

Secondly,

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* Beatè certè omnes vivere volumus, neq; quiſquam eſt in hominum genere qui non huic ſententiæ, antequam planè emiſſa ſit, conſentiat. De morib. Eccleſ. Cathol. *cap.* 3.

† Τυγχάνει δὲ τοῦ ζητουμένου οὐδὲν μᾶλλον ἄλλος ἄλλου. Max. Tyr. Diſſ. 19.

** Δι' οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ δι' ἐλπίδα ἀγαθοῦ καὶ ἄγνοιαν.

|| Ἀγαθοῦ φαντασίᾳ, τὸ μὴ ἀγαθὸν διώκεται ἐν χώρᾳ ἀγαθοῦ. Diſſ. 32.

Secondly, WHEN I conſider the woeful *Miſtakes* that have been about this Matter, I cannot but conclude it neceſſary that the Chriſtian Religion, which aſſures us of ſuch great Things, ſhould certainly guide us here, and ſet us in the right Way. The Buſineſs hath been hotly diſputed among the ſeveral Schools of Philoſophers. * *Varro* reckon'd up very near three hundred Opinions about the chief Good of Men: And it being a great while ſince he caſt up that Accompt, 'tis probable the Reckoning is increas'd ſince. Not long after we find † *Tully* muſtering up the ſeveral Conceits of Philoſophers on his Head: And § *Lactantius* doth the like. It is very deplorable that Men frame falſe Ideas of ſo important a Thing, ſome of them Monſtrous and Ridiculous, others Imaginary and Inſignificant, and moſt of them of a quite contrary Nature to what can truly denominate us Happy. Some have had ſuch mean and narrow Thoughts of *Felicity* as to expect it from a Brute or a Plant, or (which is more ſottiſh) from a dull and ſenſeleſs Log, a Stock or a Stone. Many have ſoughtfor it in bodily Delights. and Pleaſures, there are thoſe that have thought to graſp it in the ſame Arms, where they encloſ'd the Objects of their ſenſual Amours. Some have imagin'd they have carried it about them in their Purſes,or had it lock'd up ſafe at home in their Coffers. Others fancied it reſided on their Palates, or they could let it down their Throats with their Wine and Junkets. Others have gaped wide,and thought to ſuck it in with the Air, placing it in empty Applauſe, and a vain Purchaſe of a Name. All Men one time or other miſtake it, by caſting away their Affections and Wiſhes on ignoble and unfit Objects.

* Apud *Auguſtin.* de Civ. D. l. 19. c. 2.

† Tuſc. Quæſt. lib. 2. De finib. lib. 2.

§ De falſa Sapientia cap. 7.

THE ſacred Inſtitution therefore of *Chriſt Jeſus* is tender'd on purpoſe to correct Mens Errors, and to engage their Addreſſes and Applications to ſuch a *Bleſſedneſs*, whoſe tranſcendent Worth and Excellency may at once legitimate and confine their Deſires. There was a Neceſſity that ſuch a one ſhould be reveal'd from Heaven: For the Light of Nature proves dim and duskiſh, and the Ethics of the beſt Moraliſts, not enlighten'd by the Goſpel, are not able to conduct us to true Happineſs. Yea truly, the *Pagan* World was ſenſible of its Imperfection, and therefore fled to their *Oracles* and *Revelations*. The *Arabian* Impoſtor pretended to a *Prophetic Spirit* and *immediate Inſpiration*. And every famous Lawgiver of old made the People believe that they were in Fee with ſome *Deity*, that by that means there there might be an Impreſs of Authority upon their Laws and Conſtitutions: Juſt as we ſee the Prince's Stamp makes any Coin current. Such Cheats and wily Stratagems, ſuch politick Forgeries as theſe were thought requiſite to govern the People, and oblige them to Obedience.

BUT *Chriſtians* alone are upon a true and ſolid Bottom, being ſwaid by the Oracles of the Goſpel, which were deliver'd by him who was Truth itſelf, and could not deceive us, and who perfectly underſtood the Nature of real Happineſs, and whoſe Deſign it was to teach it to the World. His firſt Eſſay of Theology was his Sermon on the Mount, and we ſee that the firſt thing he there undertakes is to ſhew who are *Bleſſed*. It is Chriſtianity alone that is the ſure Conduct to Happineſs, the *One thing needful*, the *good Part* which *many* choſe, even the nobleſt Good that we can aſpire to, the moſt proper] Object that rational Appetites were made for, and that alone wherein they can find the higheſt Satisfaction.

NOW, this is it which in the next Place we are to ſearch into; our Enquiry muſt be what is the *particular Nature* of this *chief Good* and *true Happineſs*, which is the Diſcovery of the Goſpel. And firſt, I will premiſe the general Definition of Happineſs, which will agree both to God and to all his Creatures; and that is this, *Happineſs* is the Attainment of the utmoſt Perfection which the Nature of Beings is capable of. It is rightly ſaid by *Boethius*, to be ſuch a ‡ State as is compleated by the Accumulation of all Good. And thence we rationally gather that, tho' *Happineſs* be the ſame in God and in other Beings, as to the *general Notion* of it, there is a peculiar and tranſcendent Happineſs belonging to *him* above all other Beings, becauſe he is moſt Perfect and Conſummate in his Nature, and is Poſſeſſor of thoſe Excellencies which are Infinite and Immenſe, and therefore are not to be found elſewhere. But if we ſpeak of the Creatures, it is certain that they have ſuch a Perfection as their finite and ſtinted Nature is capable of, and this is *their Happineſs*. For the Happineſs of the Creature is actually to poſſeſs and enjoy all the Good that it is receptive of.

‡ Status bonorum omnium aggregatione perfectus. De Conſolat. lib. 3.

NOW, this Perfection and this Happineſs are different according to the different Natures of created Beings, for that which is Happineſs to one is not ſo to another. Therefore it is a true and ſound Notion of Beatitude which *Salluſtius* aſſigns, to wit, [†] *the proper Perfection of every thing.* All Creatures have a Happineſs, but of a different Sort or Kind. Every Rank of ſenſible Beings hath its proper Perfection which God deſign'd it for, and it is ſuitable to its peculiar Eſſence and Nature. Thus the Happineſs of *Inferior Animals* is placed in the enjoying of their Eſſence, and the Fruition of that which their particular Natures are capable of, namely, ſenſible and corporeal Good, and that only, becauſe it is ſuited to their ſenſible and brutiſh Souls, and their groveling Bodies.

B U T it is the Happineſs, which is proper to *rational Creatures*, that I'm to ſpeak of at preſent, and more particularly of *Men*; tho' from what I ſhall ſay concerning our own Happineſs, we may gather that of the *Angelical* Spirits: Only there muſt be a conſiderable Allowance for theſe latter, becauſe of their more refined Make, they being either wholly deſtitute of Bodies of their own, or clothed with ſuch as have nothing of the Groſsneſs of ours. But we being compounded of two different Parts, and having Bodies conſtantly tied to our Souls, it follows that our Happineſs is as it were a Compound, and hath different Ingredients. We partake of Senſe as well as Reaſon, Fleſh as well as Spirit, therefore our Felicity muſt be of a mix'd Nature. The Happineſs of the Body can't be the Happineſs of the Soul, but yet the Happineſs of the former is ſubordinate to the latter.

W E muſt know then that there is an *Inferior* and a *Superior Happineſs* belonging to Men: As he hath a Body, his Happineſs conſiſts in bodily Good: But as he is endued with a rational Soul, his Happineſs is placed in ſpiritual and divine Things, ſuch as are agreeable to his Soul. This is that which ſome of the Antients meant when they held that the Happineſs of Man is [*] Health of Body and Eaſe of Mind, or, as at other times they expreſs it, [†] the Delight or Pleaſure, which ariſes from both theſe, is the Beginning and End of Happineſs. *Epicurus*'s chief Good (as *Laertius* repreſents it, and ſaith it was the Author's own Explication of his Opinion) was [§] to be free from bodily Pain, and to be undiſturb'd in Mind. This is the trueſt Account, and therefore it muſt be granted that *Cicero* and *Plutarch* on one hand, and *Gaſſendus* on the other, do not deal fairly with *Epicurus*, but miſrepreſent him. He that had no Perturbations of Mind, nor Pains of Body, was according to him a *happy Man.* And this Apprehenſion of his was in the general the ſame with that of *Ariſtotle*, who ſeated *Happineſs* or the *chief Good* in the Soul and Body jointly. [||] Virtue, ſaith he, is not ſufficient to make a Man happy, unleſs the good Things of Body and Fortune be added: For theſe are neceſſary Inſtruments of Happineſs. And 'tis well known that the *Platoniſts*, as well as the *Ariſtotelians*, placed it both in the Goods of the Body and Mind, and in all the Conveniencies and Comforts of human Life.

B U T tho' this was a philoſophical Notion, that the chief Good and Happineſs conſiſted in the things of the Body as well as of the Mind, yet it is not to be admitted in *Chriſtianity*: For tho' the good things which appertain to our Bodies belong to that *Inferior* and *ſubordinate Happineſs*, which I ſpoke of before, yet they can't be reckon'd as Part of the *Supreme* and *Chief* Good, in which our Felicity conſiſts. For the Body is but in order to the Mind, and the Goods of the one in order to thoſe of the other, and therefore bodily Goods can't conſtitute the chief Happineſs. All that we can ſay of them is, that they are the inferior, ſecondary and remote Happineſs of Man in this World. Our Saviour hath given us the beſt Account of them in Mat. vi. 33. *all theſe things ſhall be added unto you*; they ſhall be given as a Surpluſage, ſomething over and above. He bids us ſeek firſt *the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs*, which are the true Happineſs, and then he promiſes that all other things ſhall be *annex'd*, To let us know that they are not Eſſential to our Happineſs, not neceſſarily included in the Nature of it, but are only *Appendages*, and caſt in as an Overplus, as a mere Addition. As a Man is Part of this lower and material World, he ſtands in need of this World's Goods, theſe earthly Enjoyments and Accommodations: And, ſo far as they are ſerviceable to our bodily Subſiſtence and our worldly Needs and Occaſions, they are deſirable yea, they are Part of our *inferior Happineſs*;

[†] παντὸς πράγματος εὐδαιμονία ἡ οἰκεία τελειότης ἐστίν.

[*] ἡ τοῦ σώματος ὑγιεία, καὶ ἡ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀταραξία. τοῦτο τοῦ μακαρίως ζῆν ἐστι τέλος. Laert. in Epicuro.

[†] τὴν ἡδονὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος λέγομεν εἶναι τοῦ μακαρίως ζῆν. Ibid.

[§] ἡ μήτε ἀλγεῖν τὸ σῶμα, μήτε ταράττεσθαι τὴν ψυχήν. Ibid.

[*] Laert. in *Ariſtotel.*

pineſs; elſe the wiſe Governor of the World would not have granted us the Enjoyment of them. We may uſe them with Pleaſure, and with Thankfulneſs, and they were given us for that Purpoſe. And they may be made *Inſtrumental* to the chief Happineſs, and ſubſervient to Virtue and Religion. But we muſt not entertain any ſuch Thought as this, that they are neceſſary to our being truly Happy: For that which is merely Acceſſary and Additional cannot be ſuch.

AND beſides, the proſperous things of this World can't be our Happineſs, becauſe they may be our Miſchief and Hurt. The *Iſraelites* Quails, tho a dainty Diſh, prov'd but a courſe Entertainment; for *whilſt the Meat was in their Mouths, the Wrath of God came upon them*; worldly Delights, which are ſweet in the Mouth, prove Gravel in the Belly, as the Holy Book expreſſeth it. The Riches and Abundance of the wicked become their Deſtruction; their Table is a Snare; their Proſperity is their Ruin. This is ſo obvious a Truth, and falls under our Obſervation ſo frequently, that I may be excuſed from enlarging upon it: I will ſay all in a Word, theſe bodily good things, which are Part of the *Inferior* or *ſubordinate Happineſs* of Man, are frequently by Man's depraved Mind made Inſtruments of Evil, and of Unhappineſs, and therefore this may convince us that they are not our chief Happineſs. Again, on the other ſide, the *Adverſe* things of this World can't make us *Unhappy*, becauſe they may be ſerviceable to our greateſt Good. Poverty and Sickneſs, and other bodily Evils and Calamities, do not impair the Happineſs of a good and virtuous Man, but adminiſter to Piety and the more vigorous Exerciſe of it. The Carriage and Examples of Confeſſors and Martyrs ſhew, that outward Sufferings are not inconſiſtent with Happineſs. And we experience daily, that thoſe things, which are accounted *worſt* and moſt afflictive, prove in the right Managing of them,and by divine Providence, the *beſt* and moſt deſirable: Yea they may ſaid to be Part of a Man's Happineſs, ſo far as they are made Inſtruments and Means of his real Good and Welfare. Yea, tho' they are *Puniſhments*, that is, they are inflicted for ſome Fault, yet they loſe not this their Vertue, for *Puniſhment* is either *Vindictive* or *Corrective*; the one is deſign'd for the wicked, the other for the good. But both are Punitive that is, grievous, afflictive and painful: And it was deſign'd that good Men ſhould be griev'd and afflicted (which is the abſtract Notion of *Puniſhment*) becauſe this ſhall prove very beneficial to them. This is certain, that to be free from Penury, Sickneſs, Diſgrace, and the like, is not Part of our Happineſs *in this Life* (tho' it ſhall be in the *other*), becauſe God hath here made the Body and outward Man liable to worldly Inconveniencies and Calamities. And we are ſure, that a Freedom from theſe is not requiſite to the Happineſs of a Man, as he hath another Part diſtinct from the Body. You may ſtile it, if you pleaſe, the Happineſs of the *Body*, not of the *Man*, eſpecially not of a *Chriſtian Man*.

HAVING thus ſhew'd, that our *chief Happineſs* is not to be ſought either in the Body or in the Things belonging to it, it follows that this Happineſs muſt reſide in the other Part of us, and be ſought for in thoſe things that are agreeable to its Nature. The *Happineſs* of rational Beings is ſeated in their Souls, the nobleſt Part of them: For it is not to be doubted, that Happineſs is chiefly the Perfection of the perfecteſt Part of Man, where are the choiceſt Powers and Faculties, and not of that inferior Moiety, the Body. It is reaſonable to acknowledge, that as Man excels all other Creatures in this lower World, ſo his Happineſs muſt be of a more excellent Nature than that of other Creatures; and conſequently he being conſtituted of Spirit and *Body*, the one divine and immortal, the other earthly and fading; the one endued with Prudence and Counſel, the other wholly void of them; the one made to rule and govern, the other to obey; it cannot be denied, that Happineſs muſt principally conſiſt and reſide in the former of theſe, the nobleſt and choiceſt Part of Man. I remember it is *Tully*'s Arguing, and 'tis very cloſe and convictive, * That (ſaith he) which is the beſt thing of all for Man, muſt of neceſſity be ſeated in the beſt Part of Man. Man's *Soul* being the chief Part of him, therefore Happineſs belongs chiefly to that; and the chief Faculties of the Soul being the Underſtanding and Will and Affections, therefore the Happineſs of the Soul conſiſts in the Exerciſe of theſe choice Operations.

FOR this Reaſon I have placed it chiefly and principally in the *Soul*. Man's Make and Fabric convinces us of this: For, 'tis an excellent Obſervation of *Maximus Tyrius*, that a *Man*'s Happineſs muſt be there, where he hath ſomething *pro-*

per

* Tuſc. Quæſt.

per and peculiar to himſelf, that is, Reaſon, Intellect, Will, and rational Affections. * *There ſeek for Man's chief Good, where his Operation is*, ſaith he. Now Underſtanding and Wiſdom, and rational Choice, are the Operation of a *Man*. And therefore here we may find the Reſidence of true Happineſs: And hence it is rational to infer, that Happineſs is not ſeated in the Things appertaining to the Body, as Wealth, carnal Pleaſures, and ſuch like: For theſe have no Proportion to the divine Part of Man, and the rational Faculties that belong to it. The ſorry Entertainments of this lower World cannot yield Satisfaction to the capacious Mind of Man. They raiſe a fierce and ravenous Appetite in us, but they are not able to allay it: We may be glutted, but we can't be fill'd, for theſe Things are not able to ſtint and terminate the Deſires of the Soul. Whereſore, as 'twas ſaid once of all the Creatures, *there was not* ſound among them *an Help meet for Man:* So may it in another Senſe be ſaid of all Creatures, and of all Enjoyments in Reference to Man's Soul, there is not among them all a meet Help for it, there is not a fit Match for the Soul. They are all below it, they are all baſe, vile, and ſordid. It is ſomething of a far diſtant Nature, that muſt repleniſh the vaſt Capacities of the immortal Mind of Man, and where his chief Felicity conſiſts.

* Ἐνταῦθα ζήτει τὸ ἀνθρώπου ἀγαθὸν ὅπου ἔργον. 34. *Diſſ.*

IT remains then that, as his Happineſs is ſeated in the *beſt and higheſt Faculties*, ſo it be converſant about the *beſt and choiceſt Object*; that which is moſt agreeable to our rational Nature, and will render us moſt happy. And what can this be, but the *divine Being?* For what can ſuit our Souls but the ſupreme Mind? God is a *ſpiritual* Being, and ſuch muſt the chief Good be: For the Soul cannot be happy in any thing that is of an inferior Nature to it, becauſe whatever is the Perfection and chief Happineſs of the Mind, muſt be of the ſame Nature with it. For this Reaſon *God* is the only Happineſs of Man; *he* is the only chief Good of the Soul: Which muſt needs be, becauſe that which is the chief Being is the chief Good of Man. Man is above all ſublunary Creatures, and therefore the *chiefeſt, higheſt, and nobleſt* Good is for him, and that is GOD. The Happineſs of Man conſiſts not in any created Being, but in that which is Uncreated, *&c.* Infinite, and that is God.

AGAIN, The *chief Good* is that, in which are all Goods, and without whom is no Good, and ſuch is God. And further, the chief Good is that, which is the *only Good* that is *abſolutely ſuch*; and none but God is of that Nature. Likewiſe, it is the Property of the moſt conſummate Good to be *deſirable for itſelf:* Which is particularly taken Notice by thoſe great Divines, * *Plato* and † *Ariſtotle*, and by *Archytas* the *Pythagorean*, quoted by § *Stobæus*, who deſcribes it thus, *for the ſake of this we deſire others things, but this itſelf we deſire and chuſe for the ſake of no other thing.* So he, ſpeaking of εὐδαιμονία. And on the contrary, 'tis rightly determin'd by one of the Ancient Fathers, || *That is not the chief Good, which is not deſired for it ſelf.*

* αὐτὸ αὑτοῦ ἕνεκα ἀσπαζόμενοι. De Rep.

† δι' αὐτὸ ἀγαπητόν. Eth. l. 1. c. 3. Rhet. l. 1. c. 7.

§ Ταύτας ἕνεκα τὰ ἄλλα αἱρεόμεθα, αὐτὰν δὲ ταύταν οὐδενὸς ἀτέρου. *Serm.* 1.

|| Non eſt ſummum bonum, quod non propter ſe expetitur. Lactant. de falſâ Sap. c. 8.

AND ſtill further, that is the *Chiefeſt, higheſt Good*, which is *moſt Perfect*, and to which nothing can be added, and ſuch is God, and conſequently he only is the Object of our Happineſs. For where there is Imperfection and Deficiency, our Deſires will not be quiet and ſatisfied, and then it is impoſſible we ſhould be happy. Beatitude then is a *Compleat* and *All-ſufficient Good*, and he that is Poſſeſſor of it wants *nothing elſe*. But it is plain to any intelligent Perſon, that a Man may have the things abovenamed, and yet ſtand in need of many good and neceſſary Things, as Knowledge, and Wiſdom, Sobriety, Faith, Repentance, and the like. In *God* then, who is All-ſufficient and Perfect, the Happineſs of all wiſe Men muſt be placed; for in him alone we find Reſt and Satisfaction, and all that we can deſire.

BUT beſides all theſe Things, it appears on another Account, that God is the Chief Good, the ſole Object of our Happineſs; namely, becauſe he is our *Ultimate End*. For this is a Maxim not to be diſputed, that what is the chief Good muſt be the chief and laſt End, unto which all Things are referr'd, and directed, to which all things tend, and at which they all aim: That is the laſt End, which ſtops and terminates our Deſires, ſo that they do not proceed to Infinity. The *laſt End* is the Upſhot of all, all *other* Things which a Man doth, are to attain this; ſo that when he is got hither, nothing is beyond: Whence it is evident, that *God* is the ultimate End of Man, which the Holy *Pſalmiſt* expreſſes thus, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee?* and *there is none upon Earth that I deſire beſides thee*, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. All inferior Things are ſubordinate to that which is Supreme as their End. This is an undeniable Law of Nature, and the Order of Things demonſtrates it: It is an unqueſtionable Truth, that all Things are to be referr'd to the Chief and Higheſt of all; and therefore, nothing being *greater, or higher than God*, he muſt needs be the *ultimate End*, and conſequently the Happineſs of Man: For (as hath been ſaid) it is the chief and laſt End that terminates our Deſires, and thereby quiets and ſettles our Minds, ſo that they ſally out no farther, and wiſh nothing elſe, but wholly acquieſce in this. This is a very neceſſary Conſideration, and ſets us right in the Notion of *Happineſs*, and irrefragably proves, that there is no other Good but *God*, that can make a reaſonable Creature happy. If we look on any Thing elſe, it cannot be our Happineſs, becauſe it is not our ultimate End, but God is; and on that Account is the Repoſe and Satisfaction, the Period and Perfection of Man: And in a Word, his ſovereign Happineſs.

BUT ſtill we are never the nearer to Happineſs, unleſs the *Faculty* and the *Object* meet together, and hold Converſe one with another; for then, and only then, are we happy, when our beſt and nobleſt Faculties *exerciſe themſelves* about the ſupreme and beſt Object; whence ariſes our *Fruition* of that Object. Now, we are arrived to the main Thing of all in our preſent Enquiry, for though God be the objective or material Happineſs of Man, yet, it is the *enjoying of this Object* that is our formal Happineſs. The chief Good would not make us Bleſſed, without this; for Happineſs is the *enjoying* Man's chief Good. That therefore is the principal Thing, which we are now to enter upon, *viz.* to enquire, How God the ſovereign Good is to be made our *actual Happineſs?* By what Ways we are to find and experience Bleſſedneſs in him? or (which is the ſame Thing, and hath been already mentioned) how we are to *enjoy* him? for *Happineſs* conſiſts in the *Fruition* of the *chief Good*, and that chief Good is *God*. The brief but full Anſwer to this Enquiry is, that God is enjoy'd, and we are thereby made happy, by *Union* and *Communion* with him.

Firſt, WE can find no Happineſs in God, unleſs he be *united* to us. This was even the Senſe of the improved Moraliſts among the *Gentiles*, *God comes to Men* ſaith * one of them, *yea, which is nearer, he comes into Men; for no Man's Mind can be good* (and conſequently happy) *without the Preſence of God*. And another thus, † *Its Good conſiſts in its being join'd to its Creator and Author, as its Evil in being united to inferior Things*. God muſt inhabit in us, and we muſt poſſeſs him, and he us, that we may have the Fruition of true Bleſſedneſs. This Apprehenſion theſe Men had in *general*, but now, as to what I muſt add next, that this Union with God is by his Son *Jeſus Chriſt*, they have none of them any Thing to ſay; here they are altogether ignorant, and therefore ſilent; but we who are bleſſed with the peculiar Diſcoveries made by the holy Scriptures, are aſſured of this great Truth. Thence we are inform'd, that our firſt Parents Happineſs was placed in their Fruition of the Deity, by whom they were created and formed: But by their wilful Defection, they ſoon apoſtatized from God, and thereby loſt their Union with him, and brought themſelves into the State of Separation, which is expreſs'd in theſe Words, *They hid themſelves from the Preſence of the Lord*, Gen. iii. 8. Before this, they were intimate with their Maker, but now they fly from him, and are Strangers to him, and, of Friends, they become profeſſed Enemies. And upon the Fall, not only our firſt Progenitors themſelves, but their whole ſucceeding Race were Sharers in this Diſunion. *Our Iniquities have ſeparated between us and our God*. Iſai. lix. 2. Hereby we are eſtranged from the beſt of Beings, and utterly diſ-join'd from him; and this Disjunction is our Unhappineſs and Miſery. But the merciful and benign Author of our Beings vouchſafed to pity the wretched State of Mankind, and to reſtore a great Part of them to their former Happineſs; namely, an Union with God.

AND this he effected by the New Covenant of Grace, thro' the gracious Interpoſing of the ſecond Perſon in the Holy Trinity, who willingly undertook to make up the Breach; and he effected it by the *Conjunction* of the *divine* and *human Nature:* For this was the only Way to accompliſh this Work. From the Union of theſe two Natures of Chriſt, ariſes a double Union betwixt him and us: *Firſt*, We are nearly and intimately join'd to him, as he aſſumed our Fleſh and became Man, and ſo we are *Fleſh of his Fleſh, and Bone of his Bone. Secondly*, As he is God, we have the Happineſs of yet a higher and nobler Condition, and are (2 Pet. i. 4.) *Partakers of the divine* Nature, as we are united to his Divinity. The ſo much celebrated *Athanaſius* was pleaſed to give us the Senſe of this in very high Language, * As the Lord, ſaith he, being cloth'd with a Body, was made Man, ſo we Men are *Deified* by the Word, being taken up by his Fleſh to Divinity.

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* Deus ad homines venit, imo, quod propius eſt, in homines venit: nulla ſine Deo mens bona eſt. *Senec.* Ep. 74.

† Τὸ οὖν ἀγαθὸν αὐτῆς ἐν τῷ συνεῖναι τῷ γεννήσαντι. κακία δὲ τοῖς ὑστέροις.

THUS there is an Union of the Saints to God, by their Union with Chriſt, who was the bleſſed Mediator of the New Covenant: And indeed, there was no other Expedient to unite God and Man, who were at Diſtance and Variance, but this joining of the ſecond Perſon of the Deity and Man together. The *Philoſophers*, that talk'd of *Happineſs*, knew nothing of this; they were not ſenſible, that All are miſerable without Chriſt: But *We*, when we ſpeak of *Happineſs*, muſt always have Reference to our *Miſery*; for we were reduced to a miſerable State by Sin, being thereby miſerably ſeparated and alienated from God, but *Chriſt* reſcued us from that State, by uniting us unto God; ſo that Happineſs, in this lapſed State, hath Relation to the Mercy of God, through our Mediator and Surety Chriſt Jeſus: *Now in Chriſt Jeſus thoſe, who were afar off, are made nigh by the Blood of Chriſt.* Eph. ii. 13. and they come to *enjoy* God, which is their *Happineſs*, by *Union* with him.

THIS is that great Myſtery of Godlineſs, which the New Teſtament hath revealed to us. There is no one Point of Chriſtianity, that is more plainly delivered than this, tho' it is leſs taken notice of, than any whatſoever; I mean the Union of Believers with Chriſt. He *that eateth my fleſh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me*, and *I in him*, John vi. 56. *You in me, and I in you*, John xiv. 20. *That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee*, John xvii. 21. *That they may be one, even as we are one*, 22. Chriſt is the *Head*, and they the *Members*, which conſtitutes but *one Body*, Eph. i. 23. Col. ii. 19. This Union between Chriſt and his Church is ſet forth by the Marriage of Husband and Wife, *Eph.* 5. 32. who, according to the firſt Inſtitution, *are one Fleſh*, Gen. ii. 24. and we know that they are, in the Conſtruction of the Law, but *one Perſon*. And ſeveral other Ways of Speaking are made uſe of, to repreſent this near and intimate Union; yea, to expreſs this entire Conjunction and Identity as it were, the *Church* and *Believers* are called *Chriſt*, 1 Cor. xii. 12. Gal. iii. 16.

I KNOW, that this Doctrine is abuſed and perverted by ſome high-flown Men, who, when they talk of being united to Chriſt, mean a Tranſubſtantiation of their Nature into the Divine. Thus the enthuſiaſtic * *Mercer* of *Amſterdam* boaſted, that he and the Saints were *Godded with God, and Chriſted with Chriſt*, meaning, that they were one Perſon with Chriſt: And others make Chriſt and a Saint one Subſtance; which argues Pride and Self-conceit, and a blaſphemous Spirit. There is no ſuch Thing here as an hypoſtatical or perſonal Union, there is no ſuch Thing as an *eſſential Conjunction*, according to that of St. *Cyprian*, † The Union between us and Chriſt neither confounds the Perſons, nor unites the Subſtances. We muſt not imagine that Chriſt is one with us, and we with him, in either of theſe Senſes; for that infinite Diſproportion, which is between God and his Creatures, will not permit this.

BUT tho' there be not this Union, which enthuſiaſtic Brains dream of, yet there is that which is True and Solid, and depends not on Fancy and falſe Reaſonings; and that is it, which I have produced from the Words of Chriſt himſelf, and of the Apoſtle St. *Paul*, and is the Foundation of all our Happineſs; becauſe hereby we have the *Fruition of God*, wherein our *Happineſs* conſiſts. No Union with Chriſt, no Happineſs! And therefore, *Jews, Pagans*, and *Turks*, cannot poſſibly be Happy, becauſe they have no Union with the Author of Happineſs: They are either ignorant of him, or wilfully renounce him. In ſhort, there could be no Union betwixt God and Man, but by this gracious Mediator and Undertaker: It is by him, that we are join'd to God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, and conſequently *enjoy* them, and thereby are *Bleſſed.*

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* Ὡς γὰρ ὁ Κύριος ἐνδυσάμενος τὸ σῶμα γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος, οὕτως ἡμεῖς οἱ ἄνθρωποι παρὰ τοῦ λόγου Θεοποιούμεθα προσληφθέντες διὰ τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ. Orat. 4.

* Holy *Nicholas.*

† Noſtra & Chriſti conjunctio nec miſcet perſonas, nec unit ſubſtantias. *De Cœna Dni.*

AGAIN, The *Enjoying of God*, which conſtitutes our Happineſs, is not only by *Union*, but *Communion* with him. And this Communion is two-fold, *1ſt. on God's Part. 2dly, on Ours.* God communicates himſelf to the Soul, and the Soul holds Communion with God. *Firſt*, On God's Part, He communicates himſelf to the Souls of Men, by *bleſſing them with all ſpiritual Bleſſings, in heavenly Things, in Chriſt*, Eph. i. 3. For *he that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him freely give us all Things?* Rom. viii. 32. How ſhall he not liberally diſtribute all thoſe Bleſſings, which Chriſt hath purchas'd for us? *Communion* imports the Communication of Benefits, and thus we have Communion with God in ſundry Reſpects; we have our Sins pardoned, and our Perſons accepted, and we become the adopted Sons of God. We are bleſſed with a Freedom from God's Wrath, and Diſpleaſure, and we are aſſur'd of his infinite Love and Compaſſions; he ſympathizes with our Miſeries, and comforts us in our Diſtreſſes, and helps and upholds us in our Difficulties. *Communion* ſpeaks Love and Friendſhip, Favour and Kindneſs, and that of God is the higheſt Happineſs, therefore ſaid to be *better than Life.* Other Inſtances of God's Communion with us, are, his bleſſing all our Enjoyments to us, and making them ſubſervient to the beſt Ends; his accepting our Prayers, and granting our Deſires, and his conferring many Things upon us, *without* our Wiſhes, and *beyond* our Expectations; his preſenting our Prayers unto God, and his interceding himſelf for us, his giving us Power and Maſtery over our Luſts, and Strength, and Ability to exert our Graces, and laſtly, his upholding us from falling away, and his preſerving us blameleſs to his heavenly Kingdom. This is the Communion, this is the Converſe that God hath with Man.

Secondly, THERE is a *Communion*, or Converſe on *our Parts*, with God. As he hath Communion and Fellowſhip with us, ſo we have with him, 1 *John* i. 3. *Truly our fellowſhip is with the Father and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.* Now, the Soul holds Communion with God, by its particular Exertments and Operations; and therefore on our Part the Communion, wherein our *Fruition* of God conſiſts, is made theſe three Ways, *1ſt.* By the Acts of our Underſtanding. *2dly.* By thoſe of our Will and Affections. *3dly.* By all our virtuous and religious Actions.

Firſt, WE hold Converſe with God by the Acts of our *Underſtanding, viz.* when we contemplate God, and arrive to a right Underſtanding of him, and of thoſe divine Things which God hath revealed to us; for, without theſe, we cannot be ſaid to *know God.* All Objects of Knowledge are not of equal Excellency and Worth, thoſe, that are ſpiritual and divine, are more perfective than ſuch as are ſenſible and bodily; and of all ſpiritual Objects 'tis certain that God is the moſt excellent, and therefore the Knowledge of him is moſt perfective; and for that Reaſon muſt be moſt priſed and valued: Whence that of the Prophet, *Jer.* ix. 24. *Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth me.* Thoſe intellectual Powers and Endowments, with which our Minds are furniſhed, cannot be better employed, than in the Contemplation of *Him* that made them, and in the Apprehenſion and Diſcovery of his excellent Nature, his tranſcendent Attributes, and in the Knowledge of all that he hath ſaid, and all that he hath done. Theſe divine and reveal'd Truths are moſt evident and illuſtrious, in themſelves, as being propounded to us by the firſt Truth, God himſelf: And we are ſure, that this infinitely wiſe and perfect Being cannot and will not deceive us, or purpoſely inſtill iuto our Minds, falſe and erroneous Conceptions; and that what he hath revealed to us, is infallibly True.

IT was a remarkable Anſwer, which *Socrates* made to *Gorgias*, when he ask'd of him, whether he did not look on the King of *Perſia* as a very *happy Man*, οὐκ ὃιδα ϖως ϖαιδέιας ἒχει, I know not (ſaith he) how much Knowledge and Learning he hath. As much as to ſay, if I knew that, I could reſolve your Queſtion fully: For miſerable is that Man, who is ignorant: But true Knowledge and Learning render a Man happy. If the Philoſopher ſpoke this (as queſtionleſs he did) of the Knowledge which the Light of Reaſon, well improved, puts Men into the Poſſeſſion of, then certainly it may be more confidently pronounc'd concerning the divine and heavenly Knowledge, the *Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Cor. iv. 6. The Knowledge of the whole Diſcovery of the Goſpel. This makes us eternally happy. *This is Life eternal to know thee, the only true God*; *and Jeſus Chriſt, whom thou haſt ſent.* John xvii. 3. And therefore 'tis no Wonder, that the Apoſtle calls it τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως, the Super-eminency, the *Excellency of the Knowledge* of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, *Phil.* iii. 8. It is by this excellent Knowledge, and by Faith (which, as it is Aſſent to divine Truths, is an Act of the Underſtanding, and belongs to this Head) that we have Converſe and Intercourſe with God, and thereby an *intellectual Fruition* of him, which is Part of our Happineſs.

2dly, OUR *Communion with God*, and conſequently our *Fruition* of him is by the exerting of our *Will and Affections*. As we have Minds capable of *knowing* God and entertaining his Diſcoveries to us, ſo we have *Wills* enabled to *conform themſelves* to ſuch Apprehenſions and Diſcoveries. Hereby we heartily give up ourſelves to God, we offer our ſelves a living Sacrifice to him, we reſign ourſelves wholly to him. Certainly it is the moſt proper Act of this elective Power deliberately to chooſe God as our ſole Guide, to ſubmit to his Dictates, and to be entirely govern'd by his Will and Laws. And here we ſee, that *Faith* is the great Inſtrument of our Communion with God and of our Happineſs; for it is not only an Act of the Underſtanding, and an Aſſenting to divine Truths, but it is an Act of the Will, and a Conſenting to the Equity and Goodneſs of all that is propoſed to us by God, and a Truſting and Relying on him. We are told, that it is *by an evil Heart of Unbelief* that we *depart from the living God.* Heb. iii. 12. And therefore it is rational to infer thence, that we are united to him and hold Communion with him by *Faith*. This is fitly ſtiled *cleaving unto the Lord with Purpoſe of Heart*, Acts xi. 23. A firm and ſteady adhering to him and to his Will, a laying hold of Jeſus and *apprehending him*, as he *hath apprehended them*, according to the Language of the Apoſtle in *Phil.* iii. 12. This mutual Commerce between God and his Servants is thus expreſs'd in *Rev.* iii. 2. *I will come in and ſup with him, and he with me.* He entertains them, and they entertain him: He makes Proviſion for them, and they for him. This reciprocal Converſe is the Meaning of the Church in *Cant* ii. 16. *My Beloved is mine, and I am his*; and again, *I am my Beloved*'s, *and my Beloved is mine*, Cant. vi. 3. There is a mutual Conſent, Agreement, and Will between Chriſt and Believers: And by this it is, that an intimate *Communion* is maintain'd between them, and the Reſult of that is an entire *Fruition.*

THEN as to our *Affections*, nothing is more evident, than that we converſe with God by them, *viz.* by *Fear* and *Reverence* of him, which begets a profound Humility, and that is the firſt Step to an Intimacy with God: By a lively *Hope* in his Mercies, which keeps us continually near to him by an ardent *Deſire* of him, which makes us long for his Preſence and Company: By *Gladneſs* and *Joy*, which is the Reſult of that Deſire, and brings us yet nearer unto God. But of all the Affections of the Mind, there is none doth ſo much promote our Fellowſhip and Commerce with God, as *Love.* The Soul, having this true magnetick Touch, is powerfully drawn to God, and is united to him, and is familiar with him, and lives in the perpetual Embraces of him. The ſame Apoſtle, who tells us, that *Chriſt dwells in our Hearts by Faith*, adds, that we *are rooted and grounded in him by Love*, Eph. iii. 17. By being enamour'd with his divine Perfections, by being raviſh'd and tranſported with his Beauty and Lovelineſs, by loving all Goodneſs and Holineſs, and all good and holy Men for his Sake. And the Soul thus placing its Love aright, it feels no Complacency, finds no Satisfaction in earthly Things, yea diſreliſhes and nauſeates the Pleaſures of the Fleſh. It hath a mean Eſteem of the World, and all things in it: Being eſpouſed and married to Chriſt, it forſakes all other Lovers, and confining it's Affection wholly to Jeſus, who cannot poſſibly be over-lov'd. For * in the *chief Good* there is no *Exceſs*; we cannot deſire, or enjoy it too much.

IT is in the executing of this divine Affection, that our Happineſs, on our Part, chiefly conſiſts. For the *Underſtanding* (which I ſpoke of before) was but in order to this: We know God, that by knowing him we may learn to conform our Wills to him, to admire him, to love him, and to delight in him: So that the End of Knowing is Willing and Affecting. They are the

Acts

* οὗ μή ἐστιν ὑπερβολὴ, τοῦτο ἀγαθόν. Rhet. l. 1. c. 7.

Acts and Operations of theſe latter Faculties, that make and denominate a Man really good and virtuous, and therefore the chief Seat of Happineſs is here. Love excels Knowledge, in that it tranſmutes us into the Nature of the Perſon loved. *He, that is thus join'd unto the Lord, is one Spirit*, 1 Cor. vi. 17. He may be ſaid to have the ſame Spirit, the ſame Deſires, and Inclinations, † the ſame Affections and Will. But tho' one excels the other, yet *both* are requiſite to that *Communion* with God, whereby we enjoy him: And the *Imagination* and *Memory* are aſſiſting, and act their Parts. By the joint Exertment of theſe Faculties and Endowments of the Mind, being purg'd, refin'd, and exalted, we receive Impreſſions from God, and communicate with him, which is the only Bleſſedneſs of rational Beings.

3*dly*, THIS Communion is effected by all *Acts of Virtue and Holineſs*, by the Concurrence of both Soul and Body in the Worſhip, Service, and Obedience unto God. For if we hold Correſpondence with God by our Underſtandings, Wills, and Affections (as I have before ſhew'd,) then it cannot be denied, that the ſame Correſpondence is maintain'd by *Action:* For thoſe Faculties and Exertments of the Soul were deſign'd in order to this, and they naturally lead unto it. * [Ye *know* theſe things; *happy* are ye, if ye *do* them.] Our Saviour hath ſhew'd wherein *Bleſſedneſs* conſiſts, in the Entrance of his Sermon on the Mount: He lets us know, that we are made happy by *acting* ſuch Graces, and *diſcharging* ſuch Duties as theſe, *Poverty of Spirit*, *mourning* for the Sins and Calamities of the World, *Meekneſs*, *hungring and thirſting after Righteouſneſs*, *Mercifulneſs*, *Purity of Heart*, *Peace-making*, *enduring Reviling and Perſecution for Righteouſneſs Sake.* And all other Virtues and Graces, all Duties and Performances whatſoever, are Ingredients of our Bleſſedneſs: For we entertain Communion with God by them. Prayer is coming into God's Preſence, and converſing with Heaven; praiſing of God, and offering Thanks unto him are the Employment of Heaven itſelf. The Word and Sacraments, and other ſacred Ordinances, were ordain'd for this very Purpoſe, namely, that we may draw nigh to God, and by our ſpiritual Exerciſes make nearer and nearer Approaches unto him, and converſe with the Divinity.

YEA and thoſe Duties, which reſpect *the governing and well ordering of our Bodies*, are Part of our Bleſſedneſs: For theſe, no leſs than our *Minds*, are under the Conduct of Chriſtianity: Though 'tis true it's Throne is in the *Heart chiefly*, and conſequently they are not ſo immediately under this Guidance. But the *Body* ſerves us to a further Uſe, and is a Help to arrive at *ſome Virtues*, and is a fit Inſtrument to promote them: It is therefore to be ſubdued and tamed by prudent Diſcipline. So that when our *Bodies* are brought under the Power and Sovereignty of our *Minds*, and are become fit Miniſters and Aids unto them in their Actings, then we have compaſs'd all the *Felicity* which our corporeal Part can attain unto. Had the firſt Parent of the World ſtood, and we in him, our *Bodies* had been of a healthful Temper, of an excellent and confirm'd Conſtitution, not, as they are now, ſhatter'd and diſeas'd: This *Task* then is *now* become our *Duty*, to repair this Maſs of Fleſh, to regulate and reform it by Sobriety and Chaſtity, by Moderation and Abſtinence, which is one Piece of holy Exorciſm on the Devil, which Chriſt commands us to uſe. We are to watch over all our Members and Senſes, all their Tendencies and Inclinations, and all the Actions and Operations reſulting from them, that they proceed not beyond what is reaſonable, and fit for them, and that they be wholly in Subſerviency to our better Part: And this is that which by *Hierocles* is call'd * the *Purgation from the material and irrational Part of Man, and from his dead Carcaſs:* For ſo he calls the *Body*, as 'tis conſider'd in it's own Nature, and not govern'd by Virtue. We muſt ſtrive for a Maſtery over our carnal and ſenſual Appetites; we muſt abandon all impure Pleaſures; we muſt be dead to all luſtful Motions and ſinful Delights.

I MUST add, that we are concern'd to make all *bodily* and *earthly Enjoyments* ſerviceable to Religion. The good things of this World, and corporal Conveniences, tho' they are not Part of our Happineſs, yet (as I had ſaid before) they may be made Helps towards it, and Inſtruments of it, by promoting of Virtue, and ſetting forth God's Glory in the World: For we are to take Occaſion, from theſe ſenſual and corporal Enjoyments, to raiſe up our

† Noſtra & Chriſti Conjunctio affectus conſociat, & confœderat Voluntates. Cypr. de Cænâ. Domin.

† *John* xiii. 17.

* Κάθαρσις ἀπὸ τῆς ὑλικῆς ἀλογίας, καὶ τοῦ θνητοειδοῦς σώματος.

Thoughts to ſpiritual and divine ones, and to praiſe God for all the Good that is in the Creatures, and to ſee the Characters of Divinity engraven upon it. And as for things of another Sort, even they are ſerviceable to our Felicity; Loſſes, Troubles, Grievances, Pain and Sickneſs are ſent by God, whoſe Will we are to reſign ourſelves to, and 'tis Part of our Happineſs ſo to do. And Death itſelf gives us a Paſſage to the Fruition of eternal Happineſs. Thus the faithful diſcharging of our Duty, and the Obſervation of the divine Laws, is every Way ſerviceable to our Happineſs.

BUT I have not yet finiſh'd this Head. There are Offices of practical Religion, which relate to our Behaviour not only towards God and ourſelves, but towards our *Brethren:* And I muſt not omit to recount *them* as Parts of the *Bleſſedneſs* I am treating of. Seeing we are not alone in the World, nor monopolize the whole Earth (as *Adam* once did for a ſhort Time,) but have many to converſe with, who are of a reſembling Make with ourſelves, Perſons that can uſe their Reaſons, and have a Government over their Actions, and moreover are deſirous (by Nature) of Communion and mutual Society; ſeeing Man is made [†] to fill up and compleat the civil Society (as *Antoninus* ſpeaks,) and his very Frame and Make ſpeaks this; ſeeing it is no Ways probable that Men were made by God with a Deſign, that they ſhould vex and trouble and make one another miſerable and calamitous, but rather 'tis highly rational to conclude, that they were made to increaſe one another's Happineſs, and to contribute towards it in all their Actions, and ſo to act for the Good of the World, and the Honour of their Maker; ſeeing things are thus, we may undoubtedly experience ſome Inſtances of *Happineſs* in chriſtian Commerce with our Brethren.

THEY are all of them a-kin to us, being all of them allied by our firſt Progenitor, and their Conditions and Natures are the very ſame with ours; and they have the ſame Image of God on them with ourſelves. We converſe with God, whilſt we converſe with his Images. Seeing God, out of his mere good Will and Bounty, erected this World, and placed Inhabitants in it, ſurely it muſt be ſomething divine and heavenly to *communicate* and *impart* what we have to others, as well as it will be beneficial to *receive* from them. It is requiſite to our Happineſs, that we do to others, as we would they ſhould do to us; that we be kindly affectionate one towards another; that our Hearts be enlarg'd with Compaſſion and good Wiſhes towards all the World; that we conſider one another to provoke unto Love and to good Works: That we exerciſe free and unforc'd Charity towards thoſe that are in Want and Neceſſity: Yea, and that we ſhew Kindneſſes even to the ungrateful and unworthy.

AND we are to impart not only our *temporal* Goods to our Brethren, but to communicate things of an higher Nature to them. We are to be helpful and beneficial to them with Reſpect to their betner Part, as well as to that which is inferior. We are to pray and intercede for one another, and to maintain holy and religious Conference; to build up others in their moſt holy Faith, to exhort, admoniſh, reprove, to *endeavour* to faſten Religion upon Mens Minds, and to reconcile them to the Practice of Virtue and a holy Life; to reſtore one another in the Spirit of Meekneſs, and being converted ourſelves to ſtrengthen our Brethren; to be every Ways ſerviceable to the Church of Chriſt, and with fervent Deſires and reſtleſs Endeavours to procure the eternal Good and Welfare of Mens Souls. This is the *Happineſs* of Man, as he is Part of the Community, as he is (with Mr. *Hobbs*'s Leave) a ſociable Creature; but much more, as he profeſſes the *Communion of Saints* to be an Article of his Belief. On this latter Account, he is in a more ſignal Manner oblig'd to uphold the chriſtian Fraternity and Fellowſhip: For he cannot be bleſſed and happy without it.

THUS, whether we are conſider'd as *ſingle Perſons*, or as *related to others*, our Happineſs is contain'd in exerciſing our Graces and doing our Duties, in living according to the divine Laws, and doing nothing unworthy of God and of our Religion. *Happy is the Man*, ſaith the wiſe *Solomon*, *that findeth Wiſdom, and the Man that getteth Underſtanding.* Prov. iii. 13. *Happineſs* is placed by him in *true Wiſdom* and *Underſtanding*, by *which* he means a virtuous and holy Life, pleaſing of God, and doing Good. Virtue and Goodneſs are requiſite

[†] Πολιτικοῦ συστήματος συμπληρωτικός. de Vitâ ſuâ.

requiſite to our Felicity, as they are Parts of it: For as God is happy by Reaſon of his excellent Nature, ſo is Man in his Meaſure and Proportion happy by having the Excellency of the divine Nature communicated to him (as far as a finite Creature is capable of it,) whereby he is diſpoſed to all Holineſs and Piety; whence, on the other Side, it is utterly impoſſible, in the very Nature of the thing itſelf, that a vicious Man ſhould be happy.

AGAIN, our Happineſs conſiſts in doing what we were made for, which is to ſerve God, and ſet forth his Glory: And on this Account it is eaſy to tell what is our Happineſs, *viz.* to be conformable to the Will and Pleaſure of him that created us, to pleaſe our Maker, to obey him in all things, and thereby to honour and glorify him. Our Happineſs muſt needs be to live to the Glory of him, who gave us our Being, and continues it to us, and to behave ourſelves towards him as Creatures. Therefore Religion is Happineſs: For all the Parts and Exerciſes of it tend to the Honour and Glory of God.

AND now I may take in again the Teſtimony of thoſe *that are without*, to let you ſee how rational a Truth this is, that Religion and Virtue are Ingredients of our Happineſs, and that there is no Poſſibility of being happy without theſe. *Pythagoras*, *Socrates*, and *Plato*, and all the great and improved Sages among the *Gentiles* acknowledg'd this; and in * another of them we find the chief Good to be defin'd *the Operation of the Mind according to the moſt perfect Virtue*; and † *that Man's Life*, ſaith he, *is happy, who acts and operates virtuouſly.* The *Stoicks*, of all the Moraliſts, contended moſt warmly, that Happineſs conſiſts in § Living well. || Reaſon, ſaith *Seneca*, is Man's higheſt Good; if he perfects this, he is to be praiſed; and he hath attain'd the End of his Nature: This perfect Reaſon is Virtue. This is that, which this Author in other Places, and *Zeno*, and *Epictetus*, and other *Stoicks* call *Living according to Nature, and following God.*

HERE only it may be obſerv'd, that it was *Ariſtotle*'s Sentiment, that Happineſs conſiſts ** not in the Poſſeſſion of Virtue, but in the Uſe of it, not in the Habit, but the Acting of it. The *Stoicks* were of another Opinon, and placed it in the *Mind* and *Habit*, as †† *Tully* teſtifies of them, and as §§ *Seneca* delivers his Judgment. But the Controverſy is ſoon ended: For both a virtuous Mind and the Act of Virtue are requiſite according to that known Determination of the *Roman* Philoſopher, |||| To have right Sentiments, and to act rightly, is ſufficient to the making of a Man's Life happy.

AND as theſe Moraliſts reckon Virtue to be Happineſs: So on the other Side they hold that Men of ſinful Lives are * unhappy, and cannot be otherwiſe; though they abound with all worldly Affluence, yet they are really the moſt wretched and miſerable Race of Men. They have *all things but that* which is only able *to make them happy.* They are a Sort of Perſons that want nothing but that, without which no Man can ever be bleſſed. There is but *One* thing neceſſary, and *that* they are deſtitute of.

AND now, if virtuous Living was reckon'd Happineſs by the *Heathen* Moraliſts, have we not greater Reaſon to think the ſame of it, when it is now under the Goſpel ſo highly improv'd, and arrived to a greater Pitch than before? The Laws and Rules preſcrib'd by our Saviour and his Apoſtles ſurpaſs in many Degrees thoſe which the *Pagans* were acquainted with. The Sum is, that Chriſtians *walk after the Spirit*, Rom. i. 8. *And are led by the Spirit*, that is, they order their Lives according to the holy Motions and Dictates of the Spirit of God; they are ruled and govern'd in their Thoughts, and Words, and Actions, by that divine *Principle.* We may juſtly then ſay, that the *chriſtian Religion* is our Happineſs; and a holy and religious Life, led according to this, is a continual and ſtated Communion with God. So it was defin'd by a devout Man among the † antient chriſtian Fathers; and being ſuch, who can deny that it brings us to the *Enjoyment* of God, which is our formal Happineſs.

NEXT

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* *Ariſtot. Eth.* l. 1. c. 7.

† Ἐςὶ γὰρ ὁ βίος εὐδαίμων τȣ̃ κατὰ τ̃ ἀρετὴν ἐνεργȣ̃ντος. Ariſtot. de Moribus. l. 10. c. 9.

§ τὸ κατὰ ἀρετὴν ζῆν. Laert in Vit. Zenonis.

Τὸ ὁμολογȣμένος τῇ φύσει ζῆν. Stobæus in Eclog.

Συμφώνως τῇ φύσει ζῆν. Epictet.

|| Hominum ſummum Bonum Ratio eſt: Hanc ſi perfecit, laudabilis eſt, & finem Naturæ ſuæ attigit. Hæc Ratio perfecta Virtus vocatur. *Seneca.* Ep. 76.

** ȣ̓κ ἐν κλήσει, ἀλλὰ χρήσει ἀρετῆς, ȣ̓κ ἐν ἕξει, ἀλλὰ ἐνεργείᾳ. Eth. ad Nicom. c. 8.

†† 1. Acad.

§§ Summum Bonum in ipſo judicio eſt, & habitu optimæ Mentis. De Vitâ beatâ. c. 9.

|||| Benè ſentire, rectèq. facere ſatis eſt ad benè beatèq. vivendum. *Cicero.*

* Αὐτάρκης ἡ κακία πρὸς κακοδαιμονίαν. Plutarch.

† Ἁγνισμός ἐςιν ἡ Θεȣ̃ συνȣσια. Greg. Naz. in his Iambicks.

NEXT, I will enter on another Argument, to prove that *Holineſs* is that, whereby we are made *Happy*; namely, becauſe *it makes us like unto God.* By the Knowledge and Practice of God's Will, the Image of God is drawn upon our Souls, according to that of the Apoſtle in 2 *Cor.* iii. 18. *We all with open face beholding as in a Glaſs the Glory of God, are changed into the ſame Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* We participate of the divine and glorious Nature, by being Holy as God is Holy, and this is our Happineſs: And here likewiſe, we have the Suffrage of the wiſeſt Men among the old Philoſophers, which may recommend this Truth to us, as that which our reaſonable Nature, without any further Diſcovery, dictates to us. The great *Plato* determines, that the chief Good of Man is * to *be like God, and that Likeneſs conſiſts in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs.* It was his ſtated Opinion and Perſuaſion, as *Laertius* relates, that this is Man's ultimate † End and Perfection. || He is the happy Man, who reſembles the Deity as much as he can, ſaith *Iamblichus.* ** Will you not place your Good and Happineſs in thoſe Things, wherein you aſſimilate God? *i. e.* in Virtue and Goodneſs, ſaith the excellent Commentator on *Epictetus.* There is nothing more reaſonable than this, becauſe our *Happineſs* conſiſts in our *Communion* with God; and this Communion is by *Likeneſs*, according to that of *Hierocles.* †† All Things are wont to be join'd together by *Likeneſs.* This is true in a more eſpecial Manner, if we apply it to our preſent Purpoſe; our Conjunction with God is by being made like to him in Purity and Holineſs. *Similitude* produces *Converſe.* Therefore to reſemble the Divinity, to imitate him in his moral Excellencies and Perfections, is the Happineſs of the rational Creature.

BUT there is yet another and more ample Demonſtration, that our Communion with God, and his with us, which I have enumerated as Parts of our *Happineſs*, are really ſo; *viz.* becauſe they are in their own Nature productive of *real Pleaſure and Delight*, which are of the very Eſſence of *Happineſs.* This then I muſt firſt make good, that *Pleaſure* is the eſſential and inſeparable Property of Happineſs, which is no hard Task to perform. Man was ſeated by God in the Garden of || *Eden*, that is, of Pleaſure, as an Emblem of that delightful Happineſs, which always attends Innocency. Uneaſineſs and Pain are Unhappineſs and Miſery, and the only Miſery; for nothing makes us unhappy and miſerable, but what is painful and tormenting; therefore on the contrary, nothing is Happineſs but what is pleaſant, and that which gives us Pleaſure and Eaſe, and takes away from us all that is ſorrowful, grievous, and uneaſy, and makes us happy.

I WOULD not be here underſtood, as if all Pleaſure were Happineſs, No, there is none drinks with greater Pleaſure than the Man in a Fever, yea, the Pleaſure is heightened by the Diſeaſe; but this Pleaſure itſelf is a Diſeaſe. There is the Pleaſure of Folly and Vice, but it is a miſtaken Pleaſure, it is a falſe Complacency and a fantaſtic Delight: Wherefore it is not every Kind of Pleaſure that gives the Denomination of happy, it muſt be a *true* and *real Pleaſure*, it muſt have theſe three Properties, Safety, Solidity, and Laſtingneſs, which never are found in the Delights and Complacencies, that are the Companions or Effects of Vice; but Virtue and Goodneſs are ſafe, ſolid, and durable, and ſo are the *Pleaſures* that attend them: And of theſe I now ſpeak, and peremptorily affirm, that they are of the very Nature and Eſſence of Happineſs. Here then we may ſafely ſay, that *Good* and *Pleaſant* are convertible, and that, which makes us *happy, delights* us; for Happineſs is *Delectation, Joy, or Pleaſure.*

WHICH I further prove from this, (which had been aſſerted before) that the chief Good or Happineſs is deſirable for it ſelf, and not for any thing elſe; and ſo 'tis the Nature of *Pleaſure*, that it cannot be ſet forth and commended by Arguments, derived from *any other Topicks* but *it ſelf*; for all things *elſe*, that admit of any Praiſe and Commendation, have a *Tendency* towards, and are *conducible* to *This.* But *Pleaſure*, in its own Nature, nakedly conſider'd, is a prevalent Motive of *Deſire*, and a powerful Attractive of *Love*; and, when we have attained this, we ſit down in the Enjoyment of ſo noble an Acqueſt, and ſeek no farther; for this *ſatisfieth.*

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* ὁμοίωσις τῷ Θεῷ. ὁμοίωσις δὲ δίκαιον ϗ ὅσιον.

† τέλος μὲν εἶναι τὴν ἐξομοίωσιν τῷ Θεῷ. Laert. in Platone.

|| Εὐδαίμων ἐστὶν ὁ Θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ὅμοιος.

** εἰ θέλεις οὖν καθ' ἃ ἴσος εἶ τοῖς θεοῖς, ἐκεῖ που τίθεσθαι τὸ ἀγαθόν. Arianus.

†† δι' ὁμοιότητος γὰρ πάντα φιλεῖ πρὸς ἄλληλα συνάπτεσθαι.

* inde Ἡδονή.

NOW this is the very exact Character of *Happineſs*, it is that which we long for upon its *own* Account, and it gives Eaſe and Satisfaction, and we look no further. Happineſs, with reſpect to the Soul, is like the impetuous Tendency of Bodies towards their *Center*, by a Principle of Gravitation: Thither they haſten, and when they come thither, they naturally lie ſtill and reſt, and are, as it were, pleas'd and ſatisfied. When the Mind is pleas'd, it hath gain'd is Felicity, it hath reach'd its Center, it acquieſces and is ſatisfied, and that is its *pleaſant Bleſſedneſs*; yea, there may be a Pleaſure in undergoing outward Evils and Troubles, for the ſake of Piety and Religion; to which purpoſe 'twas excellently ſaid by *Mat. Tyrius*, [*] "If any one takes away *Pleaſure* from "Virtue, he cuts off its Force and Power; for no Good is "deſirable if Pleaſure be abſent: For even he that willingly "undergoes Labour, according to the Preſcription of Virtue, "doth it out of the Love of Pleaſure either preſent or future.

ALL this makes it clear, that Pleaſure is the true Notion of Happineſs. And truly, if we will take the Pains with our Thoughts, to *abſtract* Happineſs from all the *Circumſtances* and *accidental Qualifications* which may belong to it, we ſhall find that *Pleaſure* ſtill remains immoveable, and we cannot by all our Art and Subtlety frame a *Happineſs* with out it: Nay, when all *Superſtructures* are pulled down, *This* only we leave as the *Baſis* and Foundation of all. This is found to be indiſpenſably neceſſary, and eſſential, and of the very intrinſick Nature of Happineſs. [†] It is generally agreed upon, ſaith the great Soul of Philoſophy, that Pleaſure and Happineſs go hand in hand; and they call a Man happy, becauſe of that Joy and Delight he is Maſter of. Which made another [‖] wiſe *Heathen*, when he was ask'd, what was Happineſs? make this Reply, That it was ἡδονὴ ἀμεταμέλητος *Pleaſure without Repentance*, i. e. ſuch a Pleaſure, as he that enjoys it will never afterwards be ſorry that he did ſo.

I COME then briefly, to ſhew the *Pleaſure* that attends the ſeveral particular Things before-mentioned, and thence further prove them to be, what I have already effected by other Topicks, *Happineſs*. *Firſt*, our *Union* with God, and his *communiating* himſelf to us, do naturally create Delight in us: Pleaſure is the inſeparable Conſequence of our being united to God, and being lov'd and careſs'd by him. As ſoon as the devout *Pſalmiſt* had begg'd that God *would lift up the Light of his Countenance upon him*, he immediately adds, in *Pſal.* iv. 7. *Thou haſt put Gladneſs in my Heart, more than in the Time that their Corn and the Wine increaſed*; which points out to us the Time of *Harveſt* and *Vintage*, at which Seaſons the Husbandmen are wont to make merry, and to rejoice more profuſely than at any other: But thoſe Joys and Feſtivities are nothing, in compariſon of thoſe Exultations and Rejoicings which attend the Senſe of God's Love and Favour. Now the holy Man can ſay, *I will both lay me down in Peace and Sleep, for thou, Lord, only makeſt me dwell in ſafety.* Whilſt others make their worldly Proſperity the ſole Matter of their Joy, I can take my Eaſe and Repoſe, and find the utmoſt Solace and Refreſhment in the Light of God's Countenance; this makes my Pillow ſoft, and my Sleep ſecure, and the Darkneſs Light; this makes me lie down with Satisfaction, and ariſe with unſpeakable Complacency.

THIS is deſervedly call'd by the Apoſtle, *The Peace of God which paſſeth all Underſtanding*, Phil. iv. 7. becauſe the Tranſports and Refreſhments, that flow from it, exceedingly tranſcend not only our Words and Expreſſions, but our very Thoughts and Conceptions, our moſt exalted Apprehenſions and Underſtandings. It is This only which is able to *keep our Hearts and Minds*, as the Apoſtle adds in that fore-named Place: This will be our beſt Guard and Protection, and make us even defy all Miſeries and Calamities which can happen to us. This pleaſant Muſick, this excellent Melody in our Breaſts, will ſweeten all the Diſcords and harſh Notes that are in the World. This will create Smiles and ſweet Aſpects, even when we meet with the ſowreſt Looks, and ſevereſt Frowns. To conclude this Particular, the Horrors of Mind, which accompany the Loſs of God's Favour, are an Evidence of the Excellency of that Joy and Pleaſure which attend it, when 'tis preſent.

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[*] Diſs. 33. εἰ τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀφαιρήσει τὸ ἡδύ, καὶ τό δυνατὸν αὐτῆς προσαφήρηκεν, οὐδὲν γὰρ τῶν καλῶν αἱρετὸν, ἀπογενομένης ἡδονῆς, καὶ γὰρ ὁ καὶ ἀρετὴν πονῶν ἑκὼν, φιλίᾳ ἡδονῆς πονεῖ παρούσης ἢ προσδοκωμένης.

[†] Τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν οἱ πλεῖστοι μεθ' ἡδονῆς εἶναι φασὶ, διὸ καὶ τὸν μακάριον ὀνομάζουσιν ἀπὸ τοῦ χαίρειν. Ariſt. Eth. l. 7. c. 11.

[‖] Hieroc. *in* Pythag.

AND as there is ineffable Delight and Satisfaction in God's communicating himſelf to us, and ſhewing Favour to us; ſo there is the like in our *Communion with him*, by the Exerciſe of our rational Faculties and Powers. As firſt, it muſt be infinitely pleaſant to *know God*, and to have right Apprehenſions concerning him. How welcome, to thoſe that ſtudy Philoſophy and the liberal Arts, is a *full and ſatisfactory Inſight* into Things? How pleaſant and grateful is a clear and diſtinct Perception of them to their Minds? How wonderfully are they taken with right Notions and Ideas? A clear and ſolid Author deſerves whole Hecatombs from them: And, upon ſome worthy Diſcovery of uſeful Knowledge, they are ready to leap and rejoice with that Mathematician's εὕρηκα. *I rejoice*, ſaith * Mr. *Ray* (and ſo ſaid *Cluſius*, another Botanick) *at the finding of a new Plant, as if I had found the greateſt Treaſure.* Now 'tis certain, the more perfect the Object is, the *Delight taken* in it is the greater, and conſequently God being the moſt perfect, our Contemplation of him muſt be accompanied with the higheſt Delectation. Beſides, Pleaſure is the Reſult of the *Agreeableneſs* of the Object to the Faculty; and on that Account our *Knowledge of God* cannot but be pleaſant to an unſpeakable Heighth. God and divine Things are fitted to our better Part, and ſuited to our immortal Minds: Whence it follows, that the underſtanding of them is delightful and ſatisfactory, and ſurpaſſes the Knowledge of all corporeal and ſenſual Things.

AND then, as to the other Operations of the Mind, the Acts of the *Will* and the *Affections*, they can never be converſant about more agreeable *Objects*, and therefore here likewiſe muſt be Pleaſure of a high Nature. He muſt be a Stranger to human Nature that queſtions, whether there be Delight in the Exertment of the Will and the Deſires of the Soul. Properly ſpeaking, *Delight* or *Pleaſure* is an Act of the *Will*, and there is nothing unpleaſant to him that wills. The *Object* is the Cauſe of *Delectation*, *only ſo far* as the *Will deſires*, and is *pleaſed with it.* Hence it is, that the ſame thing, which pleaſes one, diſpleaſes another. *Delight then*, or *Pleaſure*, is not any thing merely in the Object; but 'tis a Denomination from the Act aud Operation of the Will, cloſing with, and embracing the Object. Hence it appears, that from the agreeable Conjunction of the Object and Subject, the delectable Good and our Wills, our Pleaſure and Delight flow. And if we conſider that God is the chief Object of our Joy and our Love, and that theſe Affections were made for himſelf, and that the Heart of Man will be reſtleſs, and (like the Point of the Compaſs) ever moving, till it *turn* to him, and *fix upon* him; it will be reaſonable to infer, that Pleaſure reſults from the right placing of theſe Affections, and entertaining them with what is ſatisfactory, and that is God. Here is Eaſe and Quietneſs, and Tranquillity of Mind; here is Delectation far ſurpaſſing all mundane and ſenſible Joys; here is that Serenity of Soul which fits it for the Joys above.

AND as in the Operations of the Mind, ſo in *actual Holineſs* and *Obedience* there is true Pleaſure, and conſequently Happineſs. It muſt needs be delightful and raviſhing to addict ourſelves to Virtue and Godlineſs; to purſue the greateſt Good, to conform our Lives to the divine Laws, to act as God hath preſcrib'd, to do Good upon all Occaſions; and in a Word, it can't but be our utmoſt Pleaſure to pleaſe God, which we always do by obeying his Commands. And beſides, the whole Frame and Scheme of the Chriſtian Religion is excellently order'd for the producing and encreaſing of *Joy* and Tranquillity of Mind; all its Principles, Injunctions, and Orders being deſtructive of Covetouſneſs, Ambition, Luxury, impure Love, vain Deſires, reſtleſs Cares, paſſionate Diſputes, Anger, Envy, Malice, and all Things that diſquiet Mens Minds, and render their Lives unpeaceable and unpleaſurable; and all the Duties and Exerciſes of this Religion conducing, in their own Nature, to Delight and Satisfaction of Mind. The Votaries of ſuch a Religion muſt needs be of a ſedate and pleaſant Temper, and poſſeſs ſuch Joys as reſemble thoſe of Angels, and within a little time will be ſublimated to the ſame Degree. And moreover, there is an unutterable Pleaſure begot from a † Reflection on the ſincere Performance of religious and pious Actions, and diſcharging the Duties of Religion with Faithfulneſs. This *Pleaſure* is inſeparable from *Obedience*, and *Happineſs* from both.

HITHERTO I have deſcribed the *Happineſs* of Man in *this Life*; I have ſet forth the Bleſſedneſs of the perfect State: But it muſt be acknowledg'd, that this

* Catal. Stirp. Præfat.

† Beatitudo eſt Voluptas, quam animus percipit ex ſenſu Virtutis rectèq; factorum Conſcientiâ. *Hen. Mor. Eth.*

this is imperfect; becauſe the Nature of our mortal Condition here will not permit our State to be *fully perfect, i. e.* ſo complete as the *future* one. An Immunity from Sin and Trouble, and a Continuation of Joy without any Intermiſſions and Intervals, as they are impoſſible in this State, ſo a good and wiſe Man will not deſire them. *This* is reſerved for *another Life*; this is the peculiar Privilege of the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect: The Enjoyment of God is begun in this Life, but it is perfected in another. So there is an *inchoative*, and there is a *conſummate Happineſs*: The former is the Attainment of this Life, the latter is reſerv'd for the future State. But we muſt know, that even this proceeds by the *ſame Steps* by which our *imperfect Happineſs* did, only the Aſcents are higher and more exalted. The grand Parts of both are the ſame, but the Degrees of them differ.

THUS, to inſtance firſt in the Acts of the *Underſtanding*, the Conſummation and Perfection of the Bleſſedneſs which belongs to this Faculty is reſerv'd for the other Life. Then, like true and genuine Eagles, we ſhall gaze on the Sun, and endure its Rays: But now, our Sight is dim and purblind, our Knowledge is imperfect, and therefore liable to Errors and Miſtakes. This double State is thus repreſented by the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 12. *Now we ſee through a Glaſs darkly. but then Face to Face. Now I know in Part; but then ſhall I know even as alſo I am known.* Where the Apoſtle mentions a twofold ſeeing of God, namely, that which is the Attainment of this Life, and that alſo which we ſhall arrive to in the other World. Our Sight of God in this Life is *δι'* ἐσόπτρου, *thro' a Glaſs*, in a Perſpective, at a Diſtance; and ſo 'tis no Wonder that many Things interpoſe between us, and hinder our diſtinct View: Or, we ſee him *in a Glaſs, i. e.* not directly, but obliquely, and by Reflection only. Our Sight of God is not *immediate*, and therefore cannot be *compleat* and *perfect*. And the Mirrour that we ſee him in is ſully'd and obſcured; and thence alſo it is that a full Repreſentation of him is not convey'd to us. The Apoſtle moreover adds, that in this Life *we ſee darkly*, or *enigmatically*, according to the Greek. Our Notices of Things are full of Intricacies and Obſcurities: In all our Light there is ſome Shadow intermix'd. There were in the Old Teſtament *dark Sayings*, Pſal. lxxviii. 2. *Riddles*, Ezek. xvii. 2. *wondrous Things*, Pſal. cxix. 18. So in the New Teſtament there are *the deep Things of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 10. *Things hard to be underſtood*, 2 Pet. iii. 16. *Things hard to be utter'd*, Heb. v. 12. *Myſteries*, whence our Knowledge at the beſt is but defective, and we find our Search into Wiſdom to be difficult, and ſometimes inſuperable.

BUT in the other State all Things are clear and tranſparent, bright and manifeſt; for then *we ſhall ſee Face to Face*, we ſhall come up near to the glorious Object, and have a preſent View of it. Too nigh an Approach of the Eye to the Object is obſerv'd to hinder *corporeal Viſion*; but the nearer we are to *Divinity* in the heavenly Manſions, the brighter will the Luſtre be of the divine Majeſty. The Apoſtle adds, *we ſhall know him, even as we are known, i. e.* (as I conceive) as we are known, namely, directly and immediately, with the greateſt Certainty and Clearneſs. Then we ſhall know all Things in God; for by ſeeing him, we ſhall ſee all other Things. Some have thought this to be the Acqueſt of this Life; but that is too high a Strain; they ſeem to antedate the future State. We ſee after another and a meaner Rate in this World: And beſides, that Opinion takes away all Reaſoning and Arguing, which is ſuitable to the other State, but not to this. For here the Images and Repreſentations of Things are to be collected and inferr'd by us in a Way of Diſcourſe; but afterwards we ſhall know by Intuition. We ſhall be ſo intimately acquainted with the firſt Cauſe and prime Mover of all Things, of all Effects and Cauſes too, that we ſhall, in the Knowledge of him, know all Things beſides. But it is God himſelf that makes the Beatific Viſion. And herein conſiſts the *ultimate Perfection* of our *Underſtandings*, that they ſhall freely and fully contemplate the infinite Beauty and Majeſty, which fills all the World.

AND who can doubt, whether this will not be the Parent of the moſt exquiſite *Delight and Pleaſure*, which is the adequate Notion of *Happineſs?* If a ſhort Interview of Friends, and wiſhed-for Perſons, be ſo pleaſant an Entertainment here, as we ſee it is eſteem'd; if the Sight of endear'd Relatives be ſo raviſhing and tranſporting, that they are ready to expire in one another's Arms, and ſeem

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to be content never to behold any Thing *after* ſo deſired a View, (as the glad Patriarch accoſted his beloved *Joſeph* on ſuch an Occaſion, *Now let me die, ſince I have ſeen thy Face*; if *Gazing* on ſome mortal and fading Objects be ſo delightful and charming to the Spectators, that they can ſcarcely be diverted from fixing their Eyes upon them; if King *Solomon*'s Servants were reputed ſingularly happy, becauſe they ſtood continually before ſo excellent a Prince, and ſaw his Perſon, and heard his Wiſdom, how tranſcendently bleſſed and charming muſt the uninterrupted Viſion and perpetual Proſpect of Heaven be to the glorified Souls, when they ſhall, to eternal Ages, contemplate with Admiration the divine Perfections and Excellencies?

THE *Perfection* of the *Will* and *Affections* is to be conſider'd next. When theſe are compleatly united to God, it is eaſy to imagine, that their Happineſs will be compleat and perfect. The Will ſhall attain to its *higheſt Improvement and Perfection:* For it ſhall always be fix'd on the beſt and chiefeſt Good, and never ſally out unto any thing vicious and unlawful. And all the Motions and Affections of the Soul, which that State is capable of, (for there are *ſome* of them, as *Fear*, *Anger*, *Grief*, that are left behind) ſhall be terminated on God and Goodneſs, with an unalterable Complacency and Delight. Our *Love* (as well as our *Knowledge*) in *this Life* is languid, faint, and defective; and it muſt needs be ſo, becauſe it is hurt by ſo many Diverſions; and being ſo *divided*, it cannot be *ſtrong* and *vigorous:* But when it comes to be *wholly fixed on God*, it ſhall acquire an unſpeakable Strength and Force. *Here* it is but a weak Spark; but *there* it ſhall commence into an unextinguiſhable Flame. And indeed the *Perfection and Height* of our *Knowledge* muſt needs contribute to the utmoſt Exaltation of our *Love*. As we ſhall *ſee* more *diſtinctly*; ſo we ſhall *affect* more ardently: Our continual Contemplation of God will beget a continual Satisfaction. After Millions and Millions of Years, our Joys ſhall not diminiſh and grow ſtale; but they'll wax new and freſh, and will be as welcome as at the firſt. *Fulneſs* and *Appetite* are conſiſtent here: The ſhort is, that all the Faculties of the Mind ſhall be compleatly refin'd and purged, they ſhall be heighten'd and rais'd, and they ſhall be enlarg'd to greater Dimenſions, even as great as the Soul is capable of; and they ſhall be ſwallow'd up in the Fruition of the ſacred and undivided Trinity.

AGAIN, The *Acts of Piety and Virtue*, which ſhall be perform'd in the *future State*, ſhall be improved proportionably to the Improvement and Perfection of the Faculties. *Virtue* is imperfect here; moral Actions are defective, mix'd with Infirmities and Failings; but afterwards there ſhall be no Deficiency and Imperfection in them. Thoſe Graces and Duties, which argue Sin and Imperfection, ſhall then ceaſe; as Repentance, Prayer, (*i. e.* confeſſing of Sin, begging Helps againſt it, *&c.*) Hearing, reading the Scriptures, Sacraments. Thoſe Graces and Duties, which relate to the *Body*, ſhall then ceaſe; as Chaſtity, Temperance, Juſtice, Alms-deeds, *&c.* And thoſe alſo that refer to our Relations here, as Magiſtrates, Subjects, Parents, Children, Maſters, Servants. But the acting of thoſe Virtues and Graces which are fitted to the celeſtial State, and are practiſed in Heaven, ſhall be more vigorous and exalted than ever, and ſhall not have the leaſt Stain or Imperfection.

AND, *Laſtly*, The Happineſs of our *Bodies* ſhall exceed that which they had in this Life. Here the corporeal Steam annoy'd and polluted the pure and refin'd Spirit: Here the Soul was in Priſon, a dark and noiſome Priſon; but Death ſets the Soul free, ſo that it lives at large, and enjoys itſelf in another Manner than before: But more eſpecially after the Reſurrection, when the groſs, fleſhly Part is laid aſide, and the Body become *Spiritual* (as the Apoſtle acquaints us it ſhall be, 1 *Cor.* xv. 44.) the Change will be greater. The briefeſt Account, I can give of this, is in the Words of our Apoſtle, in *Phil.* iii. 21. *He ſhall change our vile Body, that it may be faſhion'd like unto his glorious Body.* Nothing greater can be ſaid than this; that the Bodies of the Saints ſhall communicate of the like Glory which their Saviour's Body is inveſted with.

THE Sum of all, that hath been ſaid under this Head, is that, Though the Happineſs of the other World is the ſame in the main with that which we are capable of in this, yet they differ as to ſome Motions and Affections of the Mind; as to ſome particular Acts and Exertments of Virtue, and as to the Degrees and

Meaſures of Bleſſedneſs. *In thy Preſence is Fulneſs of Joy, and at thy right Hand there are Pleaſures for evermore*, ſaith the holy Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* xvi. *ult.* where, *1ſt*, He expreſſes the true Nature of the celeſtial Happineſs by *Joy* and *Pleaſures*. *2dly*, He aſſigns the true Qualifications and Properties of it, *viz.* It's *Compleatneſs* and *Perpetuity*; *Fulneſs of Joy, and Pleaſures for evermore.* That Happineſs muſt needs be *full* and *perfect*, becauſe it is the Fruition of all that is good and excellent, and to be deſired. It muſt needs be *endleſs* and never-failing, becauſe it is not liable to any of thoſe Changes which this preſent State is ſubject to. In a Word, the *Eſſentials* of Happineſs are here in this Life; the *Perfection* of it hereafter.

THE proper *Remarks* and *Reflections* on the Whole are ſuch as theſe; *Firſt*, Hence we are inform'd of the *tranſcendent Excellency* of our Happineſs, for the Happineſs of Godlineſs is the Happineſs of Man, which is the Fruition of God himſelf, and all his infinite Perfections; therefore God is happy, becauſe he enjoys himſelf, which is the chief Good, and Man is happy on the very ſame Account. One of the antient Philoſophers had this very Notion in the main, tho' he expreſſes it irreverently: * *The Happineſs of God*, ſaith he, *is in no Part more deſirable, better, or more auguſt, than the Happineſs of a wiſe Man.* Which is too high a Strain, becauſe infinite and finite are not proportionable. *Tully* tells us, that the *Happineſs of a virtuous Man is* † *equal with that of the Gods, and like it:* That is, it is the Enjoyment of the chief Good, which is God alone. Nothing can more enhanſe the Nature of our Happineſs, nothing can ſet forth its Excellency more than this, that our Happineſs is the ſame with God's.

Secondly, THIS may convince us of the *Excellency of our Religion*, for it directly leads to Happineſs, which is the greateſt Thing wherein it can be beneficial to us. The *Pagan* Moraliſts had ſome general Notions of it, and truly conceiv'd of it in ſome Things (as I have ſhew'd in the foregoing Diſcourſe) but in the Application of it they fail'd very much, and they were exceedingly miſtaken both about the Author of it, and the Means in order to it. No other could be expected, becauſe the perfect Repreſentation of it is only to be had in the inſpired Writings. "No Book in the World, but this, ſhews a Man the adequate "End of his Being, his ſupreme Good, his Happineſs, nor directs the Means "of acquiring it, ſaith a great ** Judge in this, as well as in other Cauſes." It is the *Chriſtian* Inſtitution in particular, that conducts us to Happineſs, and preſcribes the Way to it, which no Religion before did ever ſo fully effect. Therefore, I ſay, let us be convinced of the Excellency of our Religion, which leads us into the plain, direct, and infallible Way to Happineſs, and is itſelf a ſubſtantial Part of it.

Thirdly, TAKE Notice here of the *only Remedy* againſt all Evils whatſoever. We may reduce them to theſe two, *Sin* and *Suffering*; and both of them are effectually provided againſt by this bleſſed State I have been treating of, and particularly deſcribing. By our Union and Communion with God we are freed from whatever is vicious; for the Mind can't hold Correſpondence with Sin and God too: And then by this Converſe with God we are effectually enabled to deſpiſe and ſlight the World, and not to be troubled and caſt down at any Calamities that befal us. A good Man can never be unhappy, whatever the Circumſtances of his Life be; for no State can debar him from being with God. Wherever he is, and whatever his Condition is, he hath this divine Preſence and Commerce; God communicates himſelf to him, and he holds Communion with God: It is this that cures all Diſquietments, Fears, and Sorrows: For no Man can fear, and grieve, and be diſquieted, that he hath all that he would have, I mean God, and Correſpondence with him. This is ſumm'd up in thoſe excellent Words of the great *Arabian* wiſe Man, *Acquaint thyſelf with God, and be at Peace*, Job xxii. 21. That is, Hold Commerce with God, and ſo be happy.

Fourthly, *PRIZE* and *value* this Communion and Happineſs above all, and let us aim at this in the whole Courſe of our Lives. It is granted by all Men of Judgment, that we ought to have the higheſt Eſteem for thoſe Things which merit it moſt. And certainly of all thoſe that can come into our Thoughts, there is none that equally deſerves and challenges our Eſteem with this. For this is that which puts the Price on all Things elſe, and without which nothing is to be priz'd, and in the Want of which we are wholly miſerable.

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* Καλὰ μηδένα αἱρετωτέραν εἶναι, μήτε καλλίω, μήτε σεμνοτέραν τὴν τοῦ Δίος εὐδαιμονίαν, τῆς τῶν σοφῶν ἀνδρῶν, Chryſip. *apud* Stobæum.

† Vita beata par & ſimilis deorum. *De Nat. Deor.* l. 2.

** *Hale's* Diſcourſe of the Knowledge of God and ourſelves.

ſerable. Wherefore, let us make all our Deſigns tend to this In every thing we do let us have an Eye to this, remembring that it is the great Buſineſs of our Lives to obtain and ſecure our Happineſs: This muſt be the Rule of our Deſires, Wiſhes and Endeavours. This being the *principal* and moſt *important* Thing, we muſt make it our *firſt Care* and our *chief Study*, and take all our Meaſures hence. Ceaſe we to be eager and furious in our Purſuit after temporal and worldly, carnal and ſenſual Matters: And let us be moſt ſollicitous about this one Thing neceſſary: Let this take up moſt of our Time, and be the Drift and Scope of our Lives; let this diſpoſe and ſhape all our Actions, and let us not decline any Labour or any Danger for the Purchaſe of this, which can't be too dear, whatever it coſts us.

Laſtly, ALL that hath been ſaid of Happineſs (both begun here and perfected hereafter) ſhould perſuade us effectually to a holy Life. This ſhould be the *Cloſe* of all our Doctrines and Diſcourſes; but *this* more eminently is the natural Reſult of this Doctrine of *Bleſſedneſs*; as we hope for Happineſs, our Concern is to be holy, for *without Holineſs none ſhall ſee the Lord*: And to *ſee* him is a *comprehenſive Word* for the *Bleſſedneſs* I have been ſpeaking of. Since then there is nothing enters into that eternal Kingdom that defileth; ſince none ſhall enjoy that endleſs Bliſs, but ſuch whoſe Minds were here firſt enlighten'd with divine Truths, whoſe Souls were acted by Principles of Goodneſs, and whoſe Lives were according to the righteous Laws of the Bleſſed Redeemer, the Concluſion of all may very rationally be that of the Apoſtle, *Let every one that nameth the Name of Chriſt depart from Iniquity*. Let all thoſe that profeſs themſelves Chriſtians, and expect everlaſting Happineſs in the Life to come, live religiouſly in this. For this is an undeniable Propoſition, that thoſe, whoſe Happineſs is not *begun* in *this* World, will never begin it, much leſs *perfect* it in the *other*. We are here in a State of Trial and Probation, and we act in order to another Life; and, as I have ſhew'd before, the Joys and Pleaſures of the future State depend upon this. A holy, virtuous Life is the Foundation, and the Rewards of Glory are the Superſtructure; and they who forget to lay for themſelves a good Foundation here (ſo the Apoſtle ſtiles it), they are like to fail of the Top and Crown of all in another World; yea, (which is worſe) an endleſs and intolerable Infelicity awaits them, which is as difficult to expreſs, as the contrary Happineſs of bleſſed Souls: It is but *ſhadowed* out by *Flames*; and *Fire* is but a *cold* and mean Reſemblance of it. To ſhut up all, let the Conſideration of this be an Encouragement to all heroical Acts and great Atchievements of Virtue. For the more ſtrict, and holy, and zealous a Man is in this Life, the more happy will he be in the next; for Glory is only Grace exalted and culminated.

Having thus, by Way of *Introduction*, ſpoken concerning the Nature of BLESSEDNESS, I proceed to the Conſideration of the *Particular Beatitudes* in our SAVIOUR's Sermon on the Mount, which begins thus;

MATTH. V. 1, 2, 3.

[*And ſeeing the Multitudes, he went up into a Mountain: And when he was ſet, his Diſciples came unto him: And he opened his Mouth, and taught them ſaying, Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit,* &c.]

CHRIST JESUS, the excellent Author and Founder of our Religion, as he came down from Heaven to aſcend the Croſs, and offer up himſelf a propitiatory *Sacrifice* for the loſt World, ſo he intended, by his ſpotleſs and untainted *Life*, to give Mankind an Example of perfect Holineſs and Purity; and not only ſo, but leſt the Conſideration of the *Oblation* of himſelf, and that unparallel'd *Pattern* (tho' in themſelves valid enough) ſhould not ſufficiently work upon the depraved Minds and Manners of Men; he did likewiſe endeavour by his heavenly *Doctrine*, by his divine Precepts, by his ſacred Exhortations and Diſcourſes, to win the deluded World to the Obedience of Faith, to make the fulleſt Diſcoveries of their Duties and of their Happineſs, and to urge and inculcate upon them as well the Neceſſity, as the Excellency, of of this ſacred Inſtitution. And this great Doctor and Inſtructer of Souls knowing full well that *this* was the uſual, and in a Manner the only Way to convey Notices of Thing unto Mens Minds, and to prevail with rational Perſons, and withal, *he* having the Advantage above others of being the Maſter of the moſt powerful and moving Oratory, it was his common Courſe, upon all fit Occaſions, to addreſs his Speech unto the People and Multitude of Hearers that flocked after him. And becauſe he could have no other more convenient Place at preſent, he makes a Mountain his Pulpit. This is the very Account which the Text gives you of our Saviour, [*Seeing the Multitude, he went up into a Mountain, and when he was ſet, his Diſciples came unto him: And he opened his Mouth, and taught them.*]

THIS ſeems to be the *ſame Narrative* with that in the ſixth Chapter of St. *Luke*, the main Circumſtances all agreeing, the ſame Matter and Order, the ſame Preface and Concluſion being obſervable in both. And St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke* concur in this too; that the Sermon being ended, Chriſt returned to *Capernaum*, and there cured the Centurion's Servant. But although the Beatitudes, rehearſed by both theſe Evangeliſts, are the ſame in Subſtance, yet it muſt be acknowledg'd that there is ſome Variety and Difference in the Manner of expreſſing them. Our

Evangeliſt ſets them down more fully and largely than St. *Luke*, who yet may very well be excuſed, if you remember that he was not an Eye or Ear-witneſs himſelf of what he writ, but only receiv'd the Things from thoſe that were preſent, which was but at ſecond Hand. Neither is this any Prejudice to the Authority of the evangelical Writings, becauſe the Account of Things which is given in them is *true* and *infallible*, though ſome of them are more *ample* in their Relations than others.

N AY, ſo it is, that St. *Luke's* Brevity and Conciſeneſs in his Narrative may ſerve ſometimes to explain the other's more large Relation, as I will ſhew you in the Text before us; which acquaints us that Jeſus, *ſeeing the Multitudes, went up into a Mountain.* This is according to what we read in the ſacred Story, that our Saviour ſometimes avoided the importunate Preſſings of the People towards him. More than once, we find it related that he retired from the Crowd, and betook himſelf unto Prayer, and a more ſolemn Converſe with Heaven. And it is very likely that the Text preſents to us our Saviour in this his Solitude and devout Privacy on the Mount; which may receive ſome Confirmation from that parallel Hiſtory of St. *Luke*, who in the fore-named Chapter, *ver.* 12. lets us know that [*Jeſus went out into a Mountain to pray, and continued all Night in Prayer to* God]: And then, *ver.* 17. [*He came down and ſtood in the Plain*]. And here it was, and not on the Top of the Mount, that he taught the People. By the Way we may take Notice, that Chriſt firſt made his holy Addreſſes to his Father, according to his Prieſtly Office; and then, according to his Prophetick, he taught the People. Prayer made Way for Preaching. He fervently implored the God of Heaven, before he undertook to inſtruct Men upon Earth; which may be a uſeful and neceſſary Precedent for all the Guides and Miniſters of Souls, to acquaint them with their indiſpenſable Duty and Concern, *viz.* that they be careful to diſcharge both theſe Parts of their Office, *i. e.* to invoke the divine Majeſty by ardent and frequent Petitions, to ſecure thereby a Bleſſing, and alſo to give themſelves to the publick Miniſtry of the Word, which is able to ſave their Hearers Souls. They have here the greateſt and beſt Example in the World to encourage them in this Practice. Chriſt not only prayed, but preached on the Mount, as I gather from comparing theſe two Evangeliſts: Though he aſcended that Place, yet it was not to fruſtrate the reaſonable Deſires and Requeſts of the People, and to debar them of his wholeſome and pious Inſtructions. No, *He had Compaſſion on the Multitude* (as it is ſaid of him on another Occaſion): And though he came down from the *Top* and *Extremity* of the Mount, yet he remain'd ſtill in ſome *lower* and *evener* Part of it, which by St. *Luke* is call'd τόπος πεδινὸς, and render'd by our Tranſlaters *the Plain:* And thus the Evangeliſts are eaſily reconciled, and St. *Luke* explains St. *Matthew.*

N O R need we ſtudy to find a *Reaſon*, why Chriſt made Choice of *this Place*; for it is evident, that it was capable of holding more People than the higher and narrower Part of the Mount. And this, I think, I could make good from ſeveral Paſſages in the Hiſtory of the Goſpel, that our Saviour delighted to behold a full and large Auditory, this great Legiſlator and Preacher being, without doubt, very ſenſible that he might probably ſpeak with the greateſt Advantage in a numerous Aſſembly. This is the true Account of his chooſing the broader and plainer Part of the Mount.

S O that you ſee, we have brought Chriſt down from the Mount, and yet left him there ſtill. And herein (to ſpeak in an *alluſive* Manner) they, whoſe publick Office it is to inſtruct and edify Souls, muſt be careful that they imitate our Saviour. He that is to ſpeak publickly muſt be acquainted both with the *Height* and the *Plain:* Though he ſtand upon the FORMER to inſtruct ſome Hearers, who are ſuppoſed to bring Arts and Sciences to Church along with them, yet he muſt condeſcend to place himſelf in the *Latter* if ever he would prevail with another Sort of Auditors, and effectually preach that Text into a Truth, [*Unto the Poor* (*i. e.* the mean and illiterate, and ſuch as are of a low Condition) *the Goſpel is preached*]: Or, (as thoſe Words may more emphatically be render'd, according to the Original) *the Poor are goſpelized.*

T O proceed, our Bleſſed Maſter having in ſome more convenient Place (call'd a *Plain*, in reſpect of the other Parts of the Mount) *ſet himſelf down* (καθίσαντος αὐτοῦ), as an infallible Doctor and Profeſſor, his *Diſciples came unto him.*

Where, by the Title of the μαθηταὶ, the *Diſciples*, we are to underſtand his conſtant Followers, and Hearers in Ordinary (if I may ſo ſay), ſuch as moſt frequently attended on his Preaching, and embraced his Doctrine. For though in *other Places* the μαθηταὶ be reſtrained to the Twelve Apoſtles, or Seventy Diſciples only, yet *here* we may take that Word in a larger Senſe, denoting to us all the uſual Auditors which Chriſt had, whether of a higher or lower Rank, whether the *Apoſtles* and *Diſciples* ſtrictly ſo called, or any others of a more vulgar Quality. Theſe are termed, in the Cloſe of this our Saviour's Sermon, ὄχλοι, the *Multitudes* Mat. vii. 28. [*the Multitudes* or *People were aſtoniſhed*, i. e. the *mix'd Auditory* both of his Diſciples and all other Learners and Scholars, who are ſtiled by St. *Luke* ὄχλος μαθητῶν, the *Multitude* or *Company* (as we tranſlate it) *of Diſciples*, Luke vi. 17. This Sermon of our Bleſſed Lord was both *ad Clerum* and *ad Populum*; it is fitted to the more publick Condition and Capacity of thoſe who *preſide over the Flock of Chriſt:* And it is adjuſted likewiſe to the more private Concerns and particular Duty of ſuch who are their *Charge*. If I had Time to ſurvey the ſeveral diſtinct Parts of this heavenly Diſcourſe, I queſtion not but I ſhould make it appear that it is of *univerſal* Influence and Concernment. I hope more particularly and eſpecially to convince you of this, when I come to treat diſtinctly of the *Beatitudes*, which are the *Entrance* to this divine Sermon.

THIS therefore may juſtly lead us to ſpeak ſomething in the mean time of the Nobleneſs and Excellency of Chriſt's Doctrine, as it is ſo *General* and *Catholick*, as it is calculated for all States and Conditions of Mankind, as it is contrived for the Benefit of all Perſons, as it indifferently reſpects the Welfare of the whole World, and may be ſaid to be of as *univerſal* Advantage and Intereſt, as the Light and Heat of that glorious Body which chears all the Inhabitants of the Earth. The chriſtian Religion is adapted to the Neceſſities of every one. It is made for Kings, Rulers and Magiſtrates; and they need not fear but that their People will receive a greater Luſtre by this Noble and Heaven-born Doctrine. It is fitted for great Clerks and wiſe Men, and will admirably advance all their true Notions and ſolid Sentiments of Things. It is ſuitable to Men of Buſineſs and Traffick, and will really prove to be profitable unto all things, as having annexed to it the Promiſe of this Life as well as of that which is to come. It will derive a Bleſſing to the Rich and Wealthy, and it will adminiſter the greateſt Comforts to the Poor and Neceſſitous: In ſhort, it is made for all Degrees and Qualities of Perſons. Chriſt's Commandments are exceeding broad, his Lectures are large and comprehenſive. His School is open and free; and, like a loving Maſter and kind Inſtructer, he is willing to admit every one that is willing to learn of him. Not only his Diſciples but others repaired to him, and he no ſooner ſaw them but he *taught* them. [*Seeing the Multitudes, he opened his Mouth, and taught them.*

TO paſs by on the one ſide the trifling Conceits and antique Shiftings of *Men's* Fancies on this Phraſe, *viz.* [*he opened his Mouth*]: And on the other ſide to ſuffer the prophane Wits to droll on ſtill, and laugh at it as a *Tautology*, and take Occaſion thence to undervalue and ſcoff at the *ſacred Stile* (whereas, by their Leave, I could ſhew them that this is no *unuſual Phraſe*, if not an *Elegancy* ſometimes, in the beſt Claſſick Authors, where I could ſoon ſtop their Mouths with Virgil's—*Sic ore locuta eſt*, when he ſpoke of *Dido:* To paſs by, I ſay, both the *Fanciful* and the *Prophane* Deſcants which ſome have made, I find this Expreſſion to be of a *Hebrew* Stock and Extraction, common with the *Jewiſh Rabbins* in their Writings, and uſually ſignifies to *begin to ſpeak after ſome Silence, Pauſe and Interval.*

BESIDES that *this Pleonaſm* (as many others of the like Nature) carries an *Emphaſis* along with it. It ſignifies the *delivering of ſomething very Grave and Convincing*, it acquaints us that the Matter to be treated of is ſingular and extraordinary, and conſequently it beſpeaks a ſerious Attention in the Hearers. It is no Wonder the Pſalmiſt ſaith, [*Give Ear, O my People, to my Law, incline your Ears to the Words of my Mouth*] when he tells you in the following Verſe that he will *open his Mouth in a Parable.* Thus, our Saviour here *open'd his Mouth*, and taught his Followers the greateſt, the higheſt, and the moſt important Truths in the World: And therefore it might well be given in charge, even by a Voice from Heaven, that they ſhould *Hear him*, Mat. xvii. 5. This incomparable Sermon contains in it ſuch ſublime and heavenly Doctrine as is able to ſet the Perſons who practiſe it, as far above other Men, as the Place, whereon that holy Diſcourſe was deliver'd, was lifted above the common Level of the adjoining Earth.

I WILL add likewiſe, that perhaps by this Manner of Speech [*he opened his Mouth*] may be ſignified unto us the *Ardour and Vehemency* of our Saviour's Language, the Freedom and Boldneſs he uſed, the Power and Vigour he expreſſed in his Diſcourſe. Accordingly in the End of this his Sermon the Obſervation was eaſily made that [*He ſpoke as one having Authority, and not as the Scribes and Phariſees*], who belike read very cold and frozen Lectures to the People, and did their Work ſo faintly that they either ſent their Auditors to ſleep, or out of the Place. But this divine Preacher uſed to vanquiſh his Hearers both by the Charms of his Doctrine, and the Majeſty of his Perſon. Indeed it was next to an Impoſſiblity that they ſhould not be moved and wrought upon, when both the *Speaker* and the *Matter* forced their Attention. And whereas *the Text* ſaith, he *opened his Mouth*, the other *Evangeliſt* tells us, *he lifted up his Eyes on his Diſciples*, Luke vi. 20. He was one that was not afraid to look his Hearers in the Face, and, if poſſible, by his holy Severity to daſh Vice out of Countenance.

OR, it may be this Expreſſion here may intimate unto us the *Plainneſs*, the *Clearneſs*, and *Practicalneſs* of his Doctrine. There were a Sort of Inſtructers in the World who opened their Mouths, but it was all one as if they had kept them faſt ſhut. Thus, if I ſhould inſtance in the ſingular Strains, Riddles, and Paradoxes of the *Stoicks*, they ſeemed to ſtudy *not to be underſtood.* Their *Apathy* and *Indolency*, which they ſo much cried up and commended, were Things out of the Ken of common Apprehenſions, and above the uſual Experience of Mankind. And they delivered many other Things neither reducible to *Senſe* nor *Practice.* After the ſame or the like Rate ſome Pretenders to myſtical Divinity have ſhaped their Diſcourſes, affecting an unintelligible Gibberiſh, and converſing altogether in Clouds and Darkneſs. Theſe are *upon the Mount* indeed, but they ſhould be deſired by all means to come down into the *Plain*, if ever they intend to edify. Divinity ſurely is a Thing to be underſtood, and thoſe, that lap it up in needleſs Myſteries and Obſcurities, do not know the true Nature of it, and conſult not the Plainneſs and Simplicity of Chriſt's Doctrine.

THESE are the chief Remarks which I thought fit to preſent to you from theſe Words, and I know not what elſe I ſhould offer to you unleſs I ſhould make ſome Reflection on the *Place* which our Saviour made choice of to deliver his Sermon in. And indeed there *ſeems* to be ſomething obſervable in his chooſing a *Mountain* for that Purpoſe, and for other ſolemn Enterprizes and Actions, as Mouut *Tabor* was the Place of his Transfiguration, Mount *Calvary* of his Paſſion, and Mount *Olivet* of his Aſcenſion, ſo here you take Notice that he choſe a Place of the like Nature to pray and preach in. We read indeed in the Hiſtory of the Old Teſtament, and in other credible Writers, that Hills and Mountains were frequently made uſe of by the Idolatrous Heathens, and even by the *Jews* when they were given up to Idolatry, for the Exerciſe of their ſuperſtitious and forbidden Worſhip. They generally affected theſe high Places to perform their irreligious Rites and Ceremonies in; theſe for the moſt Part were prophaned by the Idolatrous Worſhippers. But behold, theſe now are (as it were) conſecrated and devoted to pious and holy Purpoſes: Their prophane and abominable Uſe is taken away by our Saviour, who came to deſtroy the Works of the Devil, and to bleſs Places and Countries with the Service of the true God and the Exerciſe of the true Religion. More particularly, I might obſerve to you, that as the *Jewiſh Law* of Old was delivered and divulged on a *Mount* (that of *Sinai*), ſo here our new Law-giver and Bleſſed Inſtructer made choice of ſuch a Place to publiſh and proclaim the *evangelical Law.* And further, it cannot eſcape your Obſervation, that as *Moſes* and Chriſt agreed as to the *Place*, ſo *Chriſt* and *David* were united in their *Subject*, or *Matter*, which is *Bleſſedneſs*: The One in the Beginning of the *Pſalms*, the other in the Exordium of his *Sermon*, Chriſt's μακάριοι in this latter exactly anſwering to *Davids* אשרי in the former. The *Bleſſed Man* is deſcribed in the one, and no leſs is he in this other, where there are *eight Beatitudes* laid down by our Saviour, of which I ſhall give a particular Account in my enſuing Diſcourſes, but this at preſent hath been only an Introduction to them.

THE

THE FIRST
BEATITUDE
OF
POVERTY *of* SPIRIT,
OR
HUMILITY.

MAT. V. 3.

Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit: For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

HAVING already deſcanted on the Evangeliſt's Preface to our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, I proceed new to a particular Enquiry into the ſeveral *Graces* and *Beatitudes*, which make up the former Part of this excellent Diſcourſe. The firſt of them is compriſed in theſe Words, *Bleſſed are the Poor* &c. Where is obſervable 1. an Aſſertion laid down, *Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit*. 2. The Proof and Confirmation of it, *For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*. I will then undertake theſe three things, 1. To ſhew what Poverty of Spirit is. 2. To demonſtrate, that thoſe Perſons who have attain'd to it are truly *happy* and *bleſſed*, in as much as *the Kingdom of Heaven* is entailed upon them. 3. To acquaint you how we muſt attain to this Poverty of Spirit, and conſequently be bleſſed.

Firſt, WHAT is the true Import and Extent of this Grace. I conceive theſe two main things are compriſed in it: Firſt, to be prepared in Mind to entertain even outward and bodily Poverty, if that by divine Providence ſhould be our Lot: Secondly, in whatever Circumſtances we are, to be humble and lowly-minded. Firſt, to be *poor in Spirit* is to be poor in Preparation of Heart, to be always willing and ready for the Arrival of the loweſt and meaneſt

Condition in the World. This without doubt was intended by our Saviour in that Advice of his, *Mat.* xix. 21. *If thou will be perfect, go and ſell all that thou haſt.* This belongs to all Chriſtians: None can be his Diſciples who are not thus diſpoſed, that is, willing and ready to leave all. St. *Jerom* obſerves on thoſe Words of St. *Peter*, *We have left all and follow'd thee*, that the * Apoſtles had no Riches and Wealth to leave, and yet as to their Willingneſs they left the whole World. The Goſpel then requires that we look upon Poverty as no ſuch frightful thing as the World eſteems it to be, that we be prepared to embrace the moſt deſpiſed Condition for Chriſt's Sake and in the Diſcharge of a good Conſcience, that we chooſe to be baſe and vile rather than to ſin, that we chearfully ſuffer from Men rather than do any thing to offend God: That when Eaſe and Proſperity court us on one Hand to renounce our Duty, and Want and Diſtreſs on the other Hand allow us to hold faſt our Integrity, we then prefer Poverty to Riches, and Diſgrace and Contempt to worldly Honour and Greatneſs.

THUS the Words may refer to *worldly Poverty*, as a Bleſſing in ſome Caſe. And the Parallel of this Beatitude is expreſs'd abſolutely after this Manner in *Luke* vi. 20. *Bleſſed be the Poor:* And a direct Antitheſis follows in the 24th Verſe, *Wo unto you that are rich.* The *Rich* are ſuch who truſt and confide in their Riches, and place their whole Happineſs in them: But the *Poor* are thoſe who with a patient Spirit are willing to part with all they have for the Goſpel. They are prepared to loſe whatever they enjoy, rather than abandon their Innocency. Otherwiſe Poverty in itſelf is not laudable, much leſs bleſſed.

ABSURDLY therefore have † ſome of the Church of *Rome* endeavour'd to build their *Vow of Poverty* on the Words of the Text. The Poor in Spirit, ſay they, are ſuch who give away their Eſtates and Revenues, and ſhut themſelves up in mean and homely Cells, and bid adieu to the World, and never go abroad but when they are neceſſitated to beg for their Livelihood. But I cannot ſee how they can with any Colour of Reaſon make uſe of Chriſt's Words for this Purpoſe, ſeeing their Profeſſion of Poverty and Beggary is but diſſembled, and taken up (as many other things among that Sort of People) as a Cheat, to gull great Men of their Eſtates, and to amuſe ſilly People with a Semblance of ſtrange prodigious Holineſs and Self-denial. And upon this Account (if there were no other) their Show of Poverty is not to be tolerated in Religion, becauſe it is a Lye and an Impoſture, which is a thing moſt unworthy of a Chriſtian and an honeſt Man. Whilſt they pretend to be poor, they are rich and wealthy; and when their Purſes ſeem to be empty, their Coffers are full enough.

BUT beſides that this is a Cheat, it is alſo the Nurſe of innumerable Corruptions, even in the very Fundamentals of Religion: For the *Romiſh* Divines teach their Diſciples that Poverty is a Work of Perfection, and carries Merit and Satisfaction along with it, that it will compound for the vileſt Exorbitances, that it will wipe out the greateſt Villainies, and fully diſcharge all the Arrears of their former Life, tho' it was led never ſo debauchedly and prophanely. They perſuade People to ſell all they have on the Pretence of the Excellency of a *monaſtick* Life, and of the ſure Hopes of ſupererogating. And by ſuch fond and groundleſs Conceits as theſe they both pervert the Doctrine of Chriſtianity, and at the ſame Time fill their Friaries with idle and wanton Drones. But I think I need not inſiſt on this groſs Deluſion of the Papiſts: Our preſent Concern bids us remember, that the *Poverty* recommended here by Chriſt is of a quite different Nature. It will conſiſt with the Enjoyment of outward Poſſeſſions, and the Fruition of the good things which God hath beſtow'd upon us in the World: It bids no Man actually ſell or throw away what he hath, but only part with his inordinate Deſires and Luſts. The *Poverty of the Text is ſeated in the Spirit and Mind*, in the Will and Affections. Thoſe that are *poor* in this Acceptation of our Saviour order themſelves, with Reference to Wealth and Riches, after theſe following *Rules*, which I offer as a juſt Character of the Perſons the Text ſpeaks of.

Firſt, THEY are obſerved not to gather up Riches either greedily or unjuſtly. They do not make haſte to be rich, leſt upon ſuch a raſh Enterprize they ſhould haſten to commit Sin and defile their Conſciences. Secondly, when theſe Perſons have acquired any Meaſure of Riches, they ſet not their Hearts upon them. They look not on them as their Portion and Inheritance, but deſire and endeavour after a greater and fairer Allotment in another World. Thirdly, they are willing to quit all their Enjoyments, whenever they are convinced that they cannot keep them without violating their Conſciences, and diſpleaſing him who conferr'd them on them. Fourthly, when they are actually depriv'd of the worldly Wealth which they were once Poſſeſſors of, they envy not the proſperous State of others, but contentedly reſign themſelves to the good Pleaſure of the Almighty, and are ſatisfy'd that he diſpoſes of the Riches of this World as he pleaſes. Fifthly, they being in Poverty and Streights firmly truſt and rely on God's Goodneſs, and are ſtedfaſt in their Duty. And thus we have the firſt Account of the Words.

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* Apoſtoli quantum ad divitias nihil, quantum ad voluntatem totum Mundum reliquerunt. Ad *Pammach.*

† Bellarm. de Monachis lib. 2. cap. 20. Maldonat. Tirin. &c.

Secondly, To be *poor in Spirit* is not only to be outwardly poor in *preparatory Willingneſs* and *Readineſs of Mind*, but it is that excellent and comprehenſive Grace which by another Name is call'd *Humility*. It is the ſame with *the humble Spirit*, Prov. xvi. 19. Iſai. lvii. 15. Which is call'd *the poor* and *contrite Spirit*, chap. lxvi v. 2. The oppoſite to which is *being proud in Spirit*, Eccl. vii. 8. Thus theſe Antient Fathers, *Gregory Nyſſen*, *Baſil* the Great, and *Chryſoſtom* interpret this Beatitude. The firſt of theſe tells us, that Poverty of Spirit is * *a voluntary Demiſſion of Mind.* The ſecond reckons the Poor in Spirit to be thoſe that are † *little and mean in Spirit.* According to the third they are *the* § *dejected and contrite.* And ſo the *Latin* Fathers, *Auguſtine*, *Ambroſe* and *Hilary* expound the Words thus. It is call'd Poverty or Humility of *Spirit*, becauſe it is founded in the Spirit of Man, in the Faculties and Operations of his Mind, tho' it exerts and diſplays itſelf in external Effects and Actions. Now, becauſe this Grace hath different Aſpects, and ſome Acts of it relate to God, others to ourſelves, and ſome to our Brethren, I will give you a full Account of this evangelical Endowment of Humility, and of the Vice that is oppoſite to it, *Pride*, in theſe three enſuing Particulars, 1. As it hath Reference to God. 2dly, as it relates to ourſelves, 3dly, as it hath Reſpect to our Brethren.

I am in the firſt Place to ſpeak of *Humility*, as it hath immediate Reſpect to *God*, and ſo it contains in it theſe following things, 1. Humility teaches us to have high and reverent Thoughts of God's Word and Works. 2. To acknowledge his continual Benefaction towards us. 3. To ſubmit with Patience and Contentment to whatever the divine Hand ſhall inflict upon us. 4. To obey all God's Commands without murmuring. 5. To behave ourſelves towards God in all other Circumſtances like humble Perſons.

Firſt, He that hath this admirable Endowment and Virtue hath high and reverend Thoughts of God, and of all that he ſaith or doth. This he manifeſts by readily believing and confiding in whatever is deliver'd by God. Tho' in other Matters it may be lawful to diſpute and controvert the Caſe, yet here he is altogether ſilent, and credits the Oracles of Heaven, and believes God upon his Word. He knows that it is moſt ſhameful Pride and Impudence to diſtruſt any thing that is of divine Revelation, altho' it looks never ſo like an Improbability, and runs counter to the ordinary Reaſonings and Imaginations of Men. *We cannot by ſearching find out God, we cannot find out the Almighty to Perfection:* Wherefore let us not be too inquiſitive and curious, but let us be modeſt and cautious when we treat of things that relate to God and to the great Myſteries of Religion, and thoſe Matters which are exalted above the Level of our ordinary Apprehenſions; whilſt the *proud* and *prepoſterous* ſaucily pry into theſe Secrets, and peep into God's Ark, and are peremptory in their Dictates ond Concluſions concerning theſe things which God hath hid from us. *Clauſum fregit* is the Action that may be brought againſt the Perſon who dives into thoſe forbidden Secrets: He breaks open that which is ſhut, and therefore ſhut, becauſe it ought not to be open'd. Let us then take this Caution with us, *Be wiſe unto Sobriety.* A humble and moderate Enquiry into divine Myſteries is commendable, yea, indeed is our indiſpenſable Duty,

* Ἑκούσιος ταπεινοφροσύνη. Orat. 1. de Beatitud.

† Οἱ τῇ διανοίᾳ ἠλαττωμένοι. In cap. 14. Eſai.

§ Ταπεινοὶ καὶ συντετριμμένοι. Homil. in Mat. 15.

but a ſcrupulous and too buſie Search is unlawful, and no Ways becoming a Chriſtian, eſpecially if it makes humane Reaſon the adequate Rule and Meaſure of divine Truths.

HUMILITY will alſo make us careful how we pronounce concerning God's *Works.* It becomes us not to be bold and daring in judging of his Actions in the World. We muſt not venture to fathom the Depths of Providence, and undertake to comprehend thoſe Intrigues and Labyrinths which poſe the moſt knowing Saints, and puzzle the Intellects of Angels. If we have a Deſire to be of the Number of humble Chriſtians, let us imagine God ſpeaking to us as Chriſt to *Peter*, when he was ſo pragmatical as to pry into the Horoſcope of the beloved Diſciple, *What is that to thee?* Meddle with what thou haſt to do with, not with thoſe things which depend wholly on the Diſpoſal of Heaven. Pretend not to reach the Deſigns of Providence, no not in thoſe Actions which are before thy Eyes. Have always an awful and reverend Eſteem of whatever God doth, but take not upon you to penetrate into the Bottom of them.

THE ſecond Act of Humility towards God is freely to confeſs to him our Vileneſs and Sinfulneſs, to be ſenſible of our Inability to do any Good of ourſelves, and (as the Conſequence of this) to acknowledge that all Good in us and done by us is from God. The World, in the moral Acceptation of it, is not unlike the natural Syſtem of it which ſome ingenious Philoſophers have preſented us with: It is made up all of *Vortices*, of Whirlpools and Eddies, and we are continually liable to be drawn and ſuck'd in by them. Their Motion is ſtrong and attractive, and we may be fetch'd in before we are aware. That we have any Skill or Strength to reſiſt this powerful Force, and to keep ourſelves out of the Sphere of its Activity, is to be aſcrib'd wholly to the good Hand of God to us: And we ought to adore his Grace and Mercy in giving us Ability to maſter our unruly Deſires, to keep ourſelves unſpotted from the World, to conquer our ghoſtly Enemies, and to diſcharge our Duty aright. It is Humility that makes us apprehenſive how weak and frail we are, that we ſtand in need every Moment of the divine Aid and Aſſiſtance. O let us ſee how entirely we are indebted to God for our Powers of Body and Soul, for that we are, or have, or can do. It is *Pride* and *Inſolence* that makes Men attribute their Abilities, not to God's Bounty, but to their own Induſtry, reſembling herein thoſe haughty Sinners whom the Prophet *Habakkuk* ſpeaks of, who *ſacrifice to their Net, and burn Incenſe to their Drag*, Hab. i. 16. But let us aſcribe all to the divine Goodneſs and Bleſſing, as knowing that this is the proper Work of true *Humility*, and that nothing doth more commend us to the Favour and Acceptance of God.

Thirdly, HE that is truly *poor in Spirit* hath learnt to ſubmit with Patience and Quietneſs to whatever Condition is allotted him. He baniſhes all murmuring and repining, and conſiders that he is a ſubordinate and inferior Being, and therefore it is irrational to quarrel and conteſt with him who is abſolute and ſupreme. It is abſurd and ridiculous for ignorant and ſhallow Creatures to direct the Wiſdom of God, for weak and crazy Ones to controll his Power, and to guide the Hand of the Almighty in the managing of the World. The humble Soul acknowledges God in every Change of his State, and thankfully reſigns his Will to the Divine Will. He leaves all to the eternal Mind and Underſtanding which governs every thing in the Univerſe, and contrives Good out of all Evil. But the *proud Man* is diſcontented with the Condition he is in, he is diſſatisfied with his Circumſtances, queſtions God's Wiſdom, doubts of his Authority and Dominion.

Fourthly, THE humble Man performs all the Commands of God without Partiality and Reſerve. He never diſputes a divine Precept, but readily and chearfully ſets about the Practice of it, and is willing to do all that God would have him to do. He is perſuaded that Man is ſo far noble, divine and heavenly, as he conforms to what God requires, and obeys him in all things. But it is no other than deviliſh to refuſe Obedience to the divine Laws: It is confronting of God, 'tis combating the Deity, it is waging War with him who made us, on Purpoſe that we ſhould comply with his Dictates and Injunctions. Let us then not dare to oppoſe his Laws, but make it the great Buſineſs of our Lives to perform them indifferently and impartially: Whereas it is *Pride* that is the

Spring of partial Obedience, for the Man is ſo arrogant as to judge of the Fitneſs of the Commands, and to chooſe out which he thinks fit to put in Practice, whilſt in the mean time he ſlights and diſregards the reſt.

Fifthly, POVERTY of Spirit makes us behave ourſelves towards God, in all the Affairs of our Lives and in all the Acts of our Religion as indigent and precarious Creatures, owning our continual Dependance upon him. And being Poor, 'tis no Shame for us to *beg*, that is, to ſollicit Heaven with great Earneſtneſs and Importunity. A humble Chriſtian is one that gets his Living by Begging. Humility caſts him on his Knees, and in that humble Poſture he craves the divine Help and Aſſiſtance; he asks for what he wants, and he returns Thanks for what he enjoys. And in all the ſolemn Exerciſes of Devotion he diſcovers the inward Submiſſion of his Mind, by compoſing his outward Man to a decent, humble and reverent Deportment.

IN the Cloſe of this firſt general Head let me add, that we ought to be careful that our Humility, which we think to expreſs towards God, be not turn'd into *Superſtition*. The *Romaniſts* pray to Saints and Angels, and they ſay they do this out of Humility towards God, for they dare not be ſo preſumptuous as to call upon him, and to approach him immediately; wherefore they make uſe of the Mediation and Interceſſion of thoſe glorify'd Creatures. But the Apoſtle caution'd us againſt theſe Mens Practice, Col. ii. 18. *Let no Man beguile you of your Reward in a voluntary Humility, even worſhipping of Angels*, as if there were ſome ſpecial Reverence and Submiſſion in ſo doing: Whereas in Truth there is no real and true Humility in ſuch a Practice, but on the contrary, the Man who thus acts *is vainly puffed up by his fleſhly Mind*. So the Apoſtle tells us in the ſame Verſe: Whereby he ſhews that it is *Pride*, and not *Humility*, that makes Men uſe the Saints and Angels as Interceſſors and Mediators to God. Thus much concerning that Part of Humility or Poverty of Spirit, which hath Reference to God, and therefore is call'd *walking humbly with God*, and ſo is a proper Duty we owe to him.

IN the ſecond Place, there is an Humilty, or Poverty of Spirit, that is exercis'd towards *ourſelves*: Which is no other than this, to have a low and mean Opinion of ourſelves, *not to be wiſe in our own Eyes* (as *Solomon* deciphers this Virtue, *Prov.* iii. 7.) *not to think of ourſelves more highly than we ought to think, but to think ſoberly*, as the Apoſtle hath excellently deſcribed it, *Rom.* xii. 3. Chriſtian Humility ſuffers us not to arrogate any thing to ourſelves, but teaches us to underſtand ourſelves aright, to paſs a juſt Judgment on ourſelves. I will comprize all in theſe 4 Particulars. We muſt have mean Thoughts. 1. of our Knowledge, 2. of our Graces and holy Actions. 3. of our earthly Privileges and Enjoyments. 4. we muſt diſcover all this by our outward Carriage and Behaviour.

1. THIS Poverty of Spirit forbids all high Thoughts and Over-valuings of the Gifts and Endowments of our Minds, and all the Attainments belonging to them. What is more frequent than the *Pride* of *Knowledge?* There was one *Palemon* who gave out with great Aſſurance, that all Learning was born, and wou'd die with him. And there are many that fall but a little ſhort of him: They vilify other Mens Notions as falſe and chimerical, but vaunt of their own as true and ſolid. See, how they ſtretch themſelves to their utmoſt Dimenſions, and love to look on their fair Proportions! Hear, how lowdly they boaſt of their own Wiſdom, and depreſs that of all others. But Humility checks and ſtifles all ſuch Extravagancy as this, and renders Men modeſt both in Thoughts and Words. Read theſe Words in *Prov.* xxx. 2. and gueſs whoſe they are: *Surely I am more brutiſh than any Man, and have not the Underſtanding of a Man.* Would one take theſe to be the Words of *Solomon*, who was the wiſeſt Man on Earth? Yet ſo it is. The wiſer any Man is, the leſs conceited is he of his Knowledge. For he being the Poſſeſſor of Humility, this ſuffers him not to view himſelf thro' a flattering Optick. It bids him not magnify, but leſſen himſelf in his own Eſteem. It commands him to ſuſpect his own Judgment and Opinion, if it were for no other Reaſon but becauſe it is his own. He that is Maſter of this Virtue * *ought* (as the great Philoſopher ſaith) *for the Preſervation of Truth to retract his own Sayings and Sentiments*, when there is Occaſion for it, and confeſs his former Error.

2. HUMILITY, as it relates to ourſelves, is having mean Thoughts of our Graces, our holy Actions and Duties. *I live*, ſaith the Apoſtle, but immediately he corrects himſelf, and qualifies what he had ſaid, *yet not I, but Chriſt that*

* δεῖ ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τὰ οἰκεῖα ἀναιρεῖν. Ariſtot. Eth. l. 1. c. 4.

liveth in me, Gal. ii. 20. The ſpiritual Life of Grace is wholly from and by Chriſt Jeſus. They that acknowledge not this are great Strangers to chriſtian Humility, and they are not a few that are of this Number. Even the beſt Men ſometimes are proud of their Graces and their Strictneſs of Life, and boaſt of their ſpiritual Gifts and Endowments, and look not at the Infirmities and Failings which accompany them. Yea, it is poſſible for them to be proud of their very Humility, as was rightly objected by *Plato*, to the *Cynick*, when he trampled on his fine Carpets and Counterpanes. But this is rightly eſteem'd * the worſt Sort of Pride by one of the chiefeſt Moraliſts among the Pagans, becauſe it confounds the very Nature of Virtue, and makes it Matter of Vice. The *Stoicks* of old were faulty as to this, they were Men of great Morals, but their very Morality adminiſter'd to their Pride. For their great Aim was to be above others, to go beyond the common Rules and Principles which other Mens Ethicks furniſh'd them with. Thus it was Part of the *Stoical* Doctrine, that Virtue is to be loved and practis'd merely for its own ſake, without any Reſpect to Reward. And whilſt others confeſs'd that they were Men of Paſſions and Reſentments, theſe Perſons wou'd own no ſuch thing, but pretended to a perfect Apathy, and a Freedom from all troubleſome Impreſſions. And ſuch like high Srrains and Rants they were noted for, which were found impracticable by others. But this made them horribly conceited and preſumptuous, unſufferably impious and haughty: Which was one Reaſon why the *Stoicks*, of all Sects, were moſt averſe to the chriſtian Religion.

AMONG thoſe that profeſs *Chriſtianity* there have been too many like the proud *Stoicks*. Such were the *Cathariſts* of Old, and ſome of the *Familiſts* of late, who declare that all their Actions are void of Sin, and that they have attain'd to abſolute Perfection. Some of the *Papiſts* are palpably guilty of this Kind of Pride. The Church of *Rome*, like *Laodicea* (that eminent Inſtance of ſpiritual Pride) boaſts *that ſhe is rich* (rich in Merits) *and increas'd with Goods* (Works of Supererogation, for they have ſuch a Stock of Merits that they have enough for themſelves and for others too) but *ſhe knows not that ſhe is wretched and miſerable, and poor and blind and naked*: Tho' ſhe labours under ſo many Evils, yet ſhe is too proud to own any of them. And look among other Parties of Men, yea, look where you will, and you will find that ſpiritual Pride hath a great Aſcendent. Men overvalue themſelves for their real or reputed Virtues, and are thereby much hurt. This is the Devil's laſt Refuge, and the only Stratagem that he makes uſe of, when all others have fail'd him. Theſe Perſons whom he cannot bind in the Chains of Darkneſs and lazy Ignorance, or charm with the Magick of ſenſual Pleaſures, or inveigle with the Love of Wealth or Honour, he tempts to Pride and Self-conceit, thereby deſigning to ruin them effectually.

THE Grace, which is diametrically oppoſite to this, is that *Poverty of Spirit* I am ſpeaking of. This enables us to think lowly and meanly of our Virtues and good Actions: This excludes a fond and over-weening Opinion of our beſt Performances. Eſpecially, it forbids us *to boaſt* of any holy Enterprize, and to *proclaim* our Perfections. A humble Man is ſo far from this, that the Senſe of his Holineſs enhanſes his Humility; for the more Grace any Man is endued with, the greater Senſe hath he of his Infirmities, and of the Unworthineſs of his beſt Actions. He now ſees thoſe Defects which he took no notice of before: He acknowledges thoſe Errors, and deplores thoſe Vices, which he had not a Sight of till now. He reckons himſelf, (with St. *Paul*) *the greateſt of Sinners* and *the leaſt of Saints*, yea, *leſs than the leaſt of all Saints*, Eph. iii. 18. The *Greek* Word which he uſes here is made by the Apoſtle himſelf, and not to be found in any other Author. Againſt the Laws of *Grammar* he makes the *Superlative* admit of a higher Degree of Compariſon: He invents this *Diminutive*, to expreſs how little and mean his Thoughts were of himſelf. He is leſſer than the leaſt, if leſſer may be, of all the Saints and Servants of God. That good and holy Martyr, Mr. *Bradford*, was noted for his Language of Humility: He uſed to ſubſcribe moſt of his Letters with one of theſe debaſing Concluſions, *The moſt hard-hearted and unthankful Sinner, the moſt miſerable Sinner, a very painted Hypocrite.* Thus this Grace in the Text, if it once thoroughly poſſeſs our Hearts, will make us deeply apprehenſive of our Sinfulneſs and Unworthineſs, and force us to acknowledge and lament the Blemiſhes which adhere to our choiceſt Works, and the many Failings which accompany our improved Services.

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* ὁ γὰρ ἐπὶ ἀτυφίᾳ τύφος τυφόμενος πάντων χαλεπώτατος. Antonin.

3. Poverty of Spirit beats down in us all high Thoughts and Eſteem of our worldly Enjoyments, corporal Bleſſings and earthly Privileges. And indeed, if we muſt not be proud of our ſpiritual Gifts and holieſt Actions (as hath been ſaid) then it will undeniably follow that to ſwell with Pride, becauſe of our temporal Privileges and Enjoyments, is very abſurd and irrational, theſe being of much leſs Value than the others. A good Man conſiders that thoſe things are wholly without him, and cannot add any real and intrinſick Virtue to him: They are not of the Nature of Happineſs, and they are no Parts of it. For theſe and ſeveral other Reaſons he is humble in the greateſt Confluence of Wealth: He never thinks the better of himſelf, becauſe he is Poſſeſſor of Riches in the moſt ample Manner. His Heart is not lifted up, when he ſits in the higheſt Chair of Preferment and Honour. In the Midſt of Fame and Reputation he is not puff'd up. He is one that cannot be touch'd with the Pride of Parentage and high Birth: For tho' his Deſcent be honourable, yet he knows he ſhall debaſe it by vaunting of it. And ſo, as to all other external Excellencies, he counts it highly unreaſonable and abſurd to value himſelf upon them, and to deſpiſe others for the Want of them.

4. Humility diſcovers itſelf in our outward Carriage and Behaviour. Tho' the Seat of it be remote from Sight and outward Appearance, yet it is wont to manifeſt itſelf by viſible Signs and open Demonſtrations. And firſt I will mention that of *Apparel*, which is very viſible even in thoſe that are of an inferior Degree. There uſed heretofore to be a Difference between thoſe of a higher and a lower Rank, as to their Habits; but 'tis now taken away, and they are all become equal in their Garbs. Some of the meaner Sort affect to be as gay and expenſive in their Garments as the Wealthy and great Ones. But this unbecoming Attire, this vain and extravagant Dreſs is too plain a Proof of that *Pride* which reigns among even the meaner Rank of People. Again, It is one Part of the Deſcription of the Wicked that they *ſpeak loftily*, Pſal. lxxiii. 8. There is the Pride of the Tongue, there are arrogant and lording Words. Therefore *the Tongue that ſpeaketh proud Things* is condemn'd by the ſame holy Man, *Pſal.* xii. 3. But Humility ſhews itſelf in modeſt and becoming Speech. And ſo it doth likewiſe in Looks, which made that good Man profeſs that, as *his Heart was not haughty, ſo his Eyes were not lofty, Pſal.* cxxxi. 1. And this Kind of Pride he diſliked in others as well as in himſelf, *Him that hath a high Look will I not ſuffer, Pſal.* ci. 5. And the inſpir'd Son of this inſpired Father aſſures us, that *a proud Look is an Abomination to the Lord, Prov.* vi. 16. Geſtures alſo, as well as Looks, betray Pride, as we may gather from the Prophet *Iſaiah*'s Charge againſt the Women of his Times, Iſai. iii. 16. *The Daughters of Sion are haughty, and walk with ſtretched forth Necks*, &c. And in the other Sex who can deny, that a ſupercilious Gate and Walking as it were in State, eſpecially in Perſons of an ordinary Rank, are undoubted Badges of a proud Mind. On the contrary, Modeſty of Geſture and bodily Behaviour is an inſeparable Attendant of Humility and Poverty of Spirit.

Here I might in the Cloſe of this 2d general Head (as I did in the former) caution againſt the falſe and counterfeit Humility of ſome *Papiſts*, who, becauſe Humility is to be expreſs'd by outward and bodily Tokens, endeavour to evidence it by exceſſive Auſterity and Diſcipline on their Bodies: They affect Rags and Beggary, and abandon the Conveniencies of this Life, and thereby think they ſhew themſelves humble. But this is no true Humility and Self-denial, but an extravagant and ſuperſtitious Folly; and if it were ſearch'd to the Bottom, wou'd be found to be rank Pride Affectation, and Self-conceit: *Socrates* beheld *Antiſthenes*'s Pride and Vain-glory through his tatter'd Cloaths and neglected Habit. So it is ſometimes, that Pride diſguiſes itſelf in the very Garb of Humility.

Thus far I have deſcribed this evangelical Grace, as it hath Reference to *God* and to *ourſelves*. You will find it to be no leſs excellent, in reſpect of our *Brethren*. As thoſe that are Maſters of this heavenly Virtue behave themſelves humbly towards the *Almighty*, and modeſtly undervalue *themſelves*, ſo they are taught by the ſame holy Principle to prefer others. St. *Paul*'s Advice is general in *Epheſ.* v. 21. *Submit yourſelves one to another in the Fear of God, and in* Phil. ii. 3. *In Lowlineſs of Mind let each eſteem other better than himſelf.* And in *Rom.* xii. 10. He adviſes them *in Honour to prefer one another.* And with him agrees that other Apoſtle, 1 *Pet.* v. 5. *All of you be ſubject one to another*, and immediately he adjoins, *be clothed with Humility*. From which it appears that the Humility, which the Goſpel requires, is a ſubmitting and yielding to our Brethren, an eſteeming and preferring them before ourſelves, and ſhewing Reſpect and Honour to them. Whereas on the contrary, the proud Man is ſo far from being ſubmiſſive and compliant, that he ſhews himſelf ſtubborn and refractory towards his Brethren, and both their Perſons and Doings are diſdain'd by him. Take then the Deſcription of Humility, as it refers to others, in theſe following Particulars.

Firſt, it teaches us that we ſhould not deſpiſe and diſregard our Brethren. Which I will explain and illuſtrate in theſe three Heads,

1. HUMILITY teaches us that we ſhould not deſpiſe the *Judgment* and *Opinion* of others, but that we ſhould hearken to it, and weigh it impartially. A humble Man will believe that others may underſtand ſomething as well as himſelf: Nay, he will ſuſpect himſelf, and liſten to the ſober Dictates of others, eſpecially if their Years and Experience have taught them Wiſdom. But Men of a proud and haughty Spirit imagine, that Reaſon and good Senſe keep cloſe to them, and go no further then their Precincts. Learning is to be ſought for no where but among themſelves; you ſhall hear them extol *right Reaſon*, but you muſt know they mean always their *Own*, and their private Imagination is the Standard of all Truth. They never vouchſafe to attend what others ſuggeſt, but are peremptorily concluded by their own Judgment. This ſavours of rank Pride and Arrogance.

2. HUMILITY teaches us that we ſhould not deſpiſe and vilify the *good Actions* of others, but freely acknowledge them, and value them, tho' they come not up to the utmoſt Heighth. The contrary Practice is ſeen in too many, they undervalue weak Chriſtians, and extol their own greater Attainments. Yea, whilſt they brag that they are themſelves Poſſeſſors of all Virtues, they will not own any in their Brethren. This was the Fault of the proud *Iſraelites*, Iſai. lxv. 5. *They ſay, ſtand by thy ſelf, come not near me, for I am holier than thou.* This was the *Phariſees* Sin, *they thank'd God they were not as other Men*, Luke xviii. 11. All were Extortioners and unjuſt but they, all were graceleſs but themſelves. This is a notorious Inſtance of a haughty and inſolent Spirit. And too many Chriſtians are guilty of it, they are puffed up with Preſumption and a Contempt of their Brethren, becauſe they are inferior to them in ſpiritual Gifts. But on the contrary, the humble Chriſtian eſteems the meaneſt Attainments of his Brethren. Much more, when he beholds the extraordinary Endowments of any, is ſo far from envying them that he not only acknowledges them, but admires them, and thanks God for the Virtues which ſhine forth in others. Tho' he excels them himſelf, yet he makes uſe of their Graces in order to his greater Improvement. For he is ſenſible of this, that the godlieſt and ableſt Chriſtians, tho' they are very ſucceſsful in giving Advice and Directions to others, yet, in their particular and perſonal Neceſſities, ſtand in need of the Counſel of thoſe that are inferior to them. So much are we concern'd not to deſpiſe others.

3. TO ſum up many things together, Humility allows us not to deſpiſe and ſcorn any Man for his *Infirmities*, for his *Meanneſs* as to the Things of this World, no nor for his *Sins*. I ſay we are not to diſreſpect and vilify any Man becauſe of his Infirmities, either of Body or Soul, which he cannot help. This wou'd be to reproach his Maker, and to inſult Nature: And therefore no Man of Reaſon or Religion will offend here. Again, it is unmanly and baſe Pride to ſcorn any one for his Meanneſs and Want, in reſpect of the Things of this World, for his being inferior to us in Riches, Honours, or Preferments; for there being no real Goodneſs in the Acquiſitions of this Nature, 'tis unreaſonable to undervalue thoſe who are not Sharers in them equally with our ſelves. It is much more baſe and unworthy to contemn our Brethren for any great Calamities and Judgments that befal them, for thoſe are the Hand of God upon them, and the ſame Hand may be upon us, yea more ſevere, if we deride our Brother in his afflicted State. Beſides, there is no one, never ſo mean, ought to be diſregarded by us, becauſe divine Providence hath ſo order'd the Courſe of the World, that the *higheſt* ſtand in need of the loweſt at one Time or other. It is teſtified by common Experience, that the Greateſt are benefited by the Help of their Inferiors, as the Leprous Captain of the *Syrians* was by the

Counſel of his Servant. * *Deſpiſe not any Perſon*, ſaith one of the Jewiſh Maſters, *for there is no Man but hath his Hour.* His Meaning is, There is none ſo ſeemingly deſpicable but may ſometime be helpful to us. Therefore we ought not ſcornfully to diſdain any Man of the loweſt Rank, thinking that we have no need of him. Laſtly, I muſt not vilify and ſcorn my Brother becauſe of his *Sins*. He is to be pitied and pray'd for rather than to be contemptuouſly treated. I muſt have the greater Regard to his Soul, becauſe he hath ſo little himſelf. And I ought to conſider that I am his Brother Sinner, and conſequently, as I treat him, I may expect to be uſed myſelf. Thus a *humble* Man deſpiſes and ſcorns no one on any Account whatſoever: Which is the firſt Part of his Character.

Secondly, HUMILITY teaches us *candidly to interpret the Words and Actions* of others, fairly to conſtrue their Purpoſes and Intentions, and, when they fail and do amiſs, to deport ourſelves towards them with Meekneſs and Charity. Perhaps, malicious Neighbours have agreed to ſtain their Reputation, and to repreſent them as Criminals, and therefore we muſt be cautious how we entertain Reports concerning them. Or, ſay that the Accuſation is true, and that our Brother hath actually tranſgreſs'd, we ſhould rather look into our own Breaſts, and rifle our own Conſciences, than curiouſly pry into our Brother's Faults. But becauſe it is Charity to admoniſh him, we muſt follow the Advice of the humble Apoſtle, *Gal.* vi. 1. *If a Man be overtaken with a Fault, reſtore ſuch a one in the Spirit of Meekneſs, conſidering thy ſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted.* As much as to ſay, if thou conſidereſt thy own Obnoxiouſneſs to Temptation and Sin, thou wilt not be imperious and haughty when thou reproveſt thy Brother for his Miſcarriages, but thou wilt tell him his Fault calmly and lovingly, with great Meekneſs and Compaſſion, and with a tender Affection to his Soul. Thus the humble and condeſcending Man behaves himſelf, but of him that is proud and aſſuming that of *Solomon* is true, *In the Mouth of the fooliſh is a Rod of Pride*, Prov. xiv. 3. He ſtrikes with his Tongue as with a Rod, he inſolently rebukes and chaſtiſes thoſe whom he finds delinquent, and mixes ill Will and Rancour with his Reproofs, and inſults over his offending Neighbour, and is even glad that he hath an Opportunity of proclaiming his Faults, and making them known to the World: For thereby he ſhall cauſe his Brother to be vilify'd, and himſelf to be better eſteem'd, both which do exceedingly nouriſh his Pride.

Thirdly, HE that is Maſter of this chriſtian Humility will ſubmit to the moſt vile and mean Employments when Charity and Neceſſity require it of him. Tho' there be many whom Pride hath ſo far poſſeſs'd, that they think themſelves too good, or too great, to condeſcend to ſome ſervile Offices for the Advantage of their Brethren, yet the right humble Man hath other Thoughts and Inclinations. If there be Occaſion, he will not diſdain to be helpful to the pooreſt by undertaking ſome low and inferior Work. For we muſt think nothing unworthy which is not ſinful. We are all of us the Workmanſhip of the ſame Creator, and we equally live upon his Bounty, and therefore it becomes us to be kind to one another, and to perform all Services of mutual Love and Charity, tho' they be eſteem'd vile and ſordid. And herein we follow the Example of our humble Maſter, who ſubmitted to waſh his Diſciples Feet.

Fourthly, THE humble Man, when he is reproved for his Offences, meekly acknowledges his Guilt, and thanks the Reprover for being ſo kind and faithful to him as to rebuke him. An eminent Inſtance of this Humility was the Emperor *Theodoſius*, who, when *Ambroſe* the Biſhop of *Milan* ſharply reproved him for the Maſſacre of the People of *Theſſalonica*, patiently bore the fatherly Correction, and humbled himſelf, and thought himſelf unworthy to partake of the Myſteries of Religion till he had given open Proof of his Repentance. Hither likewiſe may be referr'd the retracting of former Errors, falſe Opinions and pernicious Perſuaſions. This is a ſignal Act of a humble and ſubmiſſive Spirit. Thus the pious Father of the *African* Church hath in his *Book* of *Retractations* found Fault with himſelf, and corrected ſundry Paſſages which he hath in his Writings. For it is not below a chriſtian Man to declare himſelf of an Opinion different from what he formerly was of, if he be convinced that that Opinion was wrong. But the *Proud* and *Lofty* will by no Means ſtoop ſo low, they ſcorn to acknowledge the Falſeneſs of their Principles, and to retract their Follies.

* Ben Azai. Avoth. c. 4.

Fifthly, ANOTHER Act of Humility, as it hath Relation to others, is Forbearing and Forgiving. Thus in *Eph.* iv. 2. with *Lowlineſs* is join'd *Long-ſuffering* and *Forbearing one another.* The lowly minded Man is not eaſily provok'd, but reſtrains his inordinate Paſſions. Tho' he merits no Ill from any Man, yet he hath learnt to bear the worſt from them. True Poverty of Spirit enables him to paſs by Scoffs and Reproaches, Revilings and Calumnies, and never to be enrag'd at them. There is not a greater Demonſtration of a humble Spirit than this. But the proud Man frets and rages when he meets with Affronts and Abuſes: There is no pacifying him when he is reproach'd, or derided, for the Haughtineſs of his Spirit cannot bear any thing of this Nature, tho' he deſerves it.

Sixthly, HUMILITY requires us to ſubmit to the lawful Authority and Powers that God hath placed us under. It forbids us to diſobey our Rulers, to deſpiſe Dominion, and ſpeak Evil of Dignities. It abetts not the ſtubborn and ſurly Humour of croſſing the Commands of our Superiors, but bids us follow the Example of our humble Maſter, who *rendred unto Cæſar the things that were Cæſar*'s, and ſtrictly enjoin'd all his Diſciples to do the ſame. But *Pride* is the Spring of Diſobedience and Rebellion: For proud and inſolent Spirits ſcorn to be ſubject, and cannot brook Superiors.

Seventhly and Laſtly, THE Humility which extends itſelf to others is diſcover'd by our outward and bodily Deportment, and by our whole Carriage in the World. A humble Man is not aſham'd of the uſual Badges and Expreſſions of a humble Mind, in his Converſe with Men. One who writes the Life of Mr. *Richard Hooker* tells us, that his Pupils might eaſily look him out of Countenance, that he never willingly look'd any Man in the Face: His poor Pariſh-clerk and he did never talk but with both their Hats on, or both off at the ſame Time. I confeſs I cannot commend this Carriage in this good Man, becauſe as he was a *Tutour* and a *Miniſter* he was to ſhew his Authority, and not to level himſelf with thoſe that were his Inferiors. As he was not to be ſupercilious, ſo he was not to be ſneaking. But the Example of this humble condeſcending Man may teach us this, to *exceed* rather on the *condeſcending* Side than on the *other*, to deport ourſelves with great Humility towards thoſe we converſe with, and neither by proud Looks nor lofty Geſtures to betray a proud Spirit, but to uſe ſuch Behaviour as carries with it the genuine Marks and Characters of chriſtian Humility. Such are Urbanity, and Civility, and Frankneſs of Converſation: Such are friendly Salutations and paying outward Reſpect and Deference to thoſe we converſe with. Hence we may gueſs at the proud Temper of a Sect among us, who yet value themſelves much upon their Humility. But let any ſober and conſiderate Man judge, whether they do not ſhew the Haughtineſs of their Hearts, by their refuſing to pay that outward Reſpect and Honour to their Brethren, which was never denied by the moſt holy and pious Perſons in all Ages of the World. Will chriſtian Humility boggle at ſuch cheap things as theſe, and to which all Men, beſides themſelves, do agree?

HERE I might take Notice of ſeveral Inſtances of an inſolent Behaviour. Suffer me to heap up ſeveral things of a different Nature together. It was the *Phariſees Pride* that made them *love the uppermoſt Rooms at Feaſts, and the chief Seats in the Synagogues, and Greetings in the Markets, and to be call'd of Men, Rabbi, Rabbi*, Mat. xxiii. 6. It was their Pride which made them boaſt of their being the *Children of Abraham*, John viii. 39. And which made them brag of their other Privileges as they were *Jews*. It proceeded from this inſulting Arrogance that, tho' they were ill Livers themſelves, yet they refus'd to keep Company with others becauſe of their Unholineſs. They would *neither eat nor drink with Publicans and Sinners*, Mat. ix. 11. Nay, they would not ſo much as be touch'd by them, as appears from *Luke* vii. 39. This was partly the Reaſon why they *waſhed* ſo often, eſpecially when they came from the Markets and Places of publick Concourſe, namely, to take off the Pollution which they had contracted by converſing with the common People, the unſanctified Rabble. It muſt be attributed to the Pride of the ſucceeding Generation of them that they call'd the ordinary and vulgar *Jews*, *Sons of Earth*, and ſtiled the *Gentiles Dogs.* See *Buxtorf*'s *Synagog.* There are other Indications of Pride; and indeed they are ſo various and different, that there is no End of rehearſing them, and therefore I ſhall not attempt it. Beſides, I ſhould make very ill Uſe of my Time and the Reader's Attention if I ſhould undertake to mention every little Inſtance of this Vice.

HERE I might (as in the two former Heads) take Notice of the *vain Shew* of *Humility* which ſome Men make: And it is ſeaſonable to caution you againſt it. There is a ſiniſter and crafty Humility, ſuch as that of the Perſons before mention'd, who (as our Saviour objected to them) *faſted often*, and on thoſe Days of Humiliation *diſfigur'd their Faces*, and made as if they were the humbleſt Creatures under Heaven. But this was done only to cheat the People, and to gain their own Ends, whilſt they were really in their Hearts Men of aſpiring Pride and Arrogance. So the *Roman Pontiff* ſtiles himſelf *the Servant of the Servants of God*, but none upon Earth gives greater Evidences of a proud and domineering Spirit. And there are ſeveral other Examples of this complimental and Mock-humility: But this is not the thing here intended. I am not commending a *Shadow* of Humility, but it is a *true* and *real* one, which this and other Parts of my Diſcourſe direct you to.

AND thus you are acquainted with the true Nature of *Poverty of Spirit.* It is not (as ſome *Roman* Catholicks would have it) a wilful Poverty or Penury, for thoſe Words *in Spirit*, being added to *the Poor*, are a plain Confutation of that fond Gloſs. Poverty of Spirit is no external State or Condition, but an inward Temper and Diſpoſition of Mind. Thoſe that are *poor in Spirit* are poor in Preparation and Readineſs of Heart, and they are poor in their own Eſteem: And this they diſcover at all fit Seaſons by outward Actions and Behaviour.

I KNOW there are other Interpretations given of theſe Words. Some would have the *Poor in Spirit* to be ſuch as are dejected in Spirit, and go mourning and lamenting all their Days by Reaſon of the deep Senſe of their Sins, ſuch as are broken and contrite in Heart, who are weary and heavy-laden with the Burden of their Iniquities. But I conceive that this is properly to be referr'd to the next Beatitude, namely, *ſpiritual Mourning*, and is a main Ingredient of it, and therefore I wholly waved it in this Place.

OTHER Commentators think that the *Poor in Spirit* are thoſe who are inwardly caſt down and depreſs'd with the Load of their Croſſes and Calamities, thoſe diſconſolate Souls who droop under their bodily Diſtreſſes, and are as 'twere *diſpirited* with the over-preſſing Burden of them. But I am of the Opinion that this Kind of Dejection and Depauperating as it were of the Spirits, namely, by outward Calamities and Afflictions, doth wholly belong to the laſt Beatitude, to wit, of *ſuffering Perſecution.* Now, 'tis unworthy of Chriſt to think that he would be guilty of *Tautology* in ſetting down the diſtinct Beatitudes, which without doubt he intended ſhould be really diſtinguiſh'd.

I PROCEED now to the next general Head of my Diſcourſe, namely, to prove that the Perſons thus characteris'd are *bleſſed. Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit.* And, as a Proof and Evidence of it, 'tis added, *For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* Humble Perſons are *bleſſed* 1. In this Life: As the learned *Hammond* is of Opinion that *a preſent State of Bleſſedneſs* is denoted all along in the Word *bleſſed*, which ſtands in the Front of every one of theſe Verſes. 2. In *another* and *future State* they ſhall be bleſſed, For *theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*: Though I ſhall have Occaſion to ſhew you by and by, that even *this* may have Reference as well to their preſent Condition, as that which is to come.

I BEGIN with the firſt, the *preſent Bleſſedneſs* of Poverty of Spirit, which I compriſe in theſe following particulars:

1. ACCORDING to the Meaſures which a wiſe Man long ſince laid down concerning *Happineſs*, namely, * that it is to do that which is *moſt proper* for our State, and to be in that Condition which is *moſt fitting* for us, it muſt be concluded that this Grace carries along with it a great Share of Happineſs: For this keeps us in our proper Place, and employs us about that which is moſt becoming and congruous. And what is that but living in a Senſe of our continual Dependence on God, and of our Obnoxiouſneſs to his Anger and Diſpleaſure by Reaſon of our Sinfulneſs? What is it but thinking meanly of all that

* Ποιεῖν τὰ ἴδια τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

that we can do, and giving up ourſelves entirely to the divine Will, and carrying ourſelves modeſtly and humbly in every Condition and Relation? This is our *proper* Duty, and nothing is ſo becoming as this. As, on the contrary, nothing is ſo improper, ſo unſeemly and indecent, as to act proudly and arrogantly. What a Soleciſm, what an Abſurdity is it for a poor Creature, whom three Fits of an Ague are able to ſhake into the Grave, who is at the Mercy of every Fly and contemptible Inſect, and is fain to be ſupplied every Day with a new Life, and whoſe Life is full of Errors and Miſtakes, and even groſs Follies; what Abſurdity, I ſay, is it for ſuch a Creature to ſwell big with Pride, and think himſelf to be ſome Body, and deſpiſe others, and even contemn Heaven? Such a Deportment is unbecoming ſo precarious a Creature; it is improper for our State, and therefore certainly mix'd with great *Unhappineſs*.

2. THE Poor in Spirit muſt needs be *bleſſed*, becauſe theſe alone are the true Diſciples of Chriſt, and the real Members of the chriſtian Church. Theſe are ſuch Scholars as that great Maſter and Teacher ſought for, and took into his School. Theſe are the true and proper Subjects of the Kingdom of Heaven. It was uſual among the *Jewiſh* Doctors to call the Time when the *Meſſiah* was to come, *The Kingdom of God* or *of Heaven*. Accordingly *John* the Baptiſt invited his Countrymen to repent on this Conſideration, That *the Kingdom of Heaven was at Hand*, that is, Chriſt was coming to appear among them, and to diſcharge the Office of a Redeemer and Saviour. This then may lead us to the Underſtanding this Beatitude in the Text, *Theirs* or *of them is the Kingdom of Heaven*, that is, ſuch Perſons as are thus qualified, who are *poor in Spirit*, are, of all Men, the fitteſt to make up the chriſtian Church, to be Subjects of the Kingdom of Grace, and to be the Diſciples of ſo meek and humble an Inſtructor. This is the very ſame that he inculcates in *Mat.* xviii. 3, 4. *Verily I ſay unto you, except ye become as little Children, ye ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Whoſoever therefore ſhall humble himſelf as a little Child, the ſame is greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven*, that is, in the Church of Chriſt. For Humility is the diſtinctive Badge of Chriſtianity.

WE may obſerve that moſt of its Precepts and Rules are for the beating down of Pride and Self-conceit, and all lofty and extravagant Opinions of our own Worth and Excellency. Shew me, if you can, one Propoſition, in all the great Heap of Chriſt's Doctrines, that doth in the leaſt foſter a proud Spirit, and foment Haughtineſs of Mind. There is not a Syllable to be found which favours any thing of this Nature. Which to me is the greateſt Argument and Conviction that can be of the Truth and Excellency of Chriſtianity. For 'tis well known which Way the World ſteers, and how Mens Mind are commonly affected: They do not uſe to repreſent themſelves worſe than they are, they endeavour to be eſteem'd wiſe and underſtanding, great and powerful (whether they be really ſo or no) they ſpread their Sails as wide as they can, they ſpeak big and look great. If they had the modelling and framing of Religion, there would be no ſuch Beatitude belonging to it as *Poverty of Spirit*, but rather *Pride* would be the great Cardinal Virtue in their Ethicks. That Perſon then diſcovers a right *evangelical* Spirit who is lowly and humble. *Pride* and *Chriſtianity* are inconſiſtent. A proud Chriſtian is a Contradiction.

IT is true this Grace makes not any great Shew: It loves not to vaunt itſelf to the World, and to expoſe its Beauty to every common Eye. It ſeeks Retirements, it ſhuns Applauſe, and affects not popular Acclamations. The Poſſeſſors of it are not of their Number who ſet and tune themſelves to a vulgar Air, and ſeem to live only by the flattering Breath of others. Humility is a thing ſolid and ſubſtantial, and is grounded upon that which is ſo: Which makes it fit to be the Ground-work and Foundation of Chriſtianity. Indeed it hath the true Property of a *Foundation*, it lies under Ground, and is out of Sight, but it is that which bears up all the Structure. Tho' unſeen, yet it is the moſt ſerviceable Part of the Building. This is a great Truth, tho' in the World's Ethicks Humility will ſcarcely paſs for a Virtue.

I COULD offer it to be obſerv'd that neither the *Greeks* nor *Latins* have a Word to ſignify *Humility*. Ταϖεινότης and Ταϖεινοφροσύνη among the Moraliſts is a contemptible Vice, and denotes a baſe and dejected Mind and Behaviour: And tho' the holy Scripture makes Uſe of this Word ſometimes to ſignify the Grace of Humility, yet among the Philoſophers it had another Signification: Yea, by St. *Paul* it is uſed to expreſs a Pretence of this Virtue, or a Colour of Humility and true Modeſty, *Col.* ii. 18. As for the *Latins*, they have no ſingle Word that ſignifies this Virtue of Humility, for the *Chriſtian* Writers firſt gave the Name of *Humility* to this Grace. But tho' this excellent Grace was ſcarce known to the *Pagan* Moraliſts, and is at this Day even among ſome Chriſtians reckon'd as the Beggar's or the Fool's Virtue, yet certainly it is the Mark of a brave and noble Spirit, it is the characteriſtical Note of Chriſtianity. To be *clothed with Humility* is the known Livery of Chriſt's Diſciples.

3. THE *Bleſſedneſs* of Poverty of Spirit appears from this, that it is one principal Qualification required to the Reception of Truth and all Divine Grace. *With the lowly is Wiſdom*, ſaid he who was the wiſeſt of Men, *Prov.* xi. 2. If we humbly acknowledge our own Blindneſs and Ignorance, we may expect the divine Illumination and Inſtruction. Our putting on this Veil of Modeſty hinders not our Sight, but enhanſes it. Humility doth kindly diſpoſe us for receiving the Communications of the Spirit. But, on the contrary, the greateſt Endowments and Graces are blaſted by Pride, and we are hinder'd by a haughty Spirit from entertaining the divine Influences. The Church of *Laodicea*, which was proud and arrogant, (as appears from her boaſting that *She was rich and had need of nothing*) was not capable of thoſe ſpiritual Benefits and Bleſſings which were offer'd to her, as long as ſhe retain'd that proud Temper: Wherefore ſhe was adviſed to purchaſe that *Eye-ſalve* which would effectually diſcuſs that *Blindneſs* which was contracted by Pride. Haughty Minds liſten not to the Dictates of the Spirit of Grace, and are hardened in their Sins and Follies. Their Palates are vitiated and corrupted, their Appetites are depraved and debauch'd: They have no Savour and Reliſh of evangelical Truths, yea, they nauſeate the things of God and of Religion. But thoſe who are poor and dejected in themſelves ſoon taſte and ſee that God is good, and that Sin is the greateſt Evil, and they are bleſs'd with the Diſcoveries of God's Will and the Manifeſtations of his Goodneſs. Theſe empty Veſſels are moſt capable of receiving and being repleniſh'd with the divine Mercy. And this is the divine Method: Humility is to prepare the Soul for great Meaſures of Grace. The Mouth, that would bring out Pearls, muſt firſt lick the Duſt, ſaith the * *Hebrew Proverb.* The plain Engliſh of which is, that Poverty of Spirit is the readieſt Way to heavenly Riches, and to obtaining the divine Favour. *Thus ſaith the Lord, the Heaven is my Throne and the Earth is my Footſtool* (that is, I am encompaſs'd with Greatneſs and Glory) *but* (notwithſtanding this) *To this Man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word*, Iſai. lxvi. 1, 2. The glorious God hath Regard to the humble, and delights in their Services. He looks not at Pomp and Grandeur, he reſpects not Wealth and worldly Abundance: He eſteems no Man for the Poſſeſſions he enjoys, or the Honours he hath attain'd to: But he prizes Humility and Poverty of Spirit without any of theſe.

* *In Kidduſhim.*

4. BLESSEDNESS is rightly annex'd to Poverty of Spirit, becauſe this is our great Preſervative againſt the Temptations of the curſed Spirit of Darkneſs. By this we are enabled to put by the Suggeſtions and Sollicitations of that profeſs'd Enemy of Souls: By this we defeat his Aſſaults at preſent, and we ſtrengthen ourſelves againſt his future Approaches: In ſhort, Humility is the moſt uſeful Engine for deſtroying the Devil's ſtrong Holds, and for fruſtrating all his black and direful Purpoſes. But Pride was the firſt and original Sin of the evil Spirits, yea it was Pride that made them Devils, and therefore they knew how ſerviceable this Vice would be to their Kingdom. Wherefore Satan ſuggeſted to our firſt Parents that, if they did but taſte of the forbidden Fruit, they ſhould preſently be exalted unto the State of Deities, they *ſhould be as Gods, knowing Good and Evil*; whereas they were now at another's Beck and Command, they ſhould by a ſudden Change become Lords and Sovereigns, and appoint the Laws of Good and Evil to themſelves. Theſe were fair Baits and alluring Temptations, and they wrought as effectually on their Thoughts

as the lovely Colour of the Fruit upon their Sight. They were ſoon infected with Pride, and aſpired to be like their Maker, and ſo hearken'd to the farther Sollicitations of the evil Spirit, and tranſgreſs'd the divine Command. And ever ſince it hath been experimentally known, that Pride hath made Way for the Breach of God's Laws, and that all Satan's Temptations are wonderfully promoted by this.

5. HUMILITY is attended with preſent *Bleſſedneſs*, becauſe it defends us not only from Temptations, but all other Dangers which Pride unavoidably expoſes Men to. It is ſafe and ſecure, it is our beſt Guard and Protection, and ſhields us from the moſt fatal Diſaſters. This is as certain as that he, who ſtands on the plain Ground, is more ſafe than he who walks on Precipices, and on the Ridges of high Rocks. But the diſmal Effects of *Pride* are to be ſeen every where. *David* being miſ-led by a proud and vain-glorious Spirit ſet his Captains on Work to number the People, having too high an Eſteem of the Arm of Fleſh, and relying on his Forces more than on the Help of God: But the ſacred Hiſtory informs us that this Sin brought down the Judgments of God upon himſelf and his People in a remarkable Manner. The Danger of Pride may be learnt from that notable Inſtance of *Nebuchadnezzar*, who ſtrutted ſo inſolently on the Battlements of his high Towers, ſcarcely believing (fond Man) that any thing was above him, fooliſhly perſuading himſelf that nothing could be higher than him and his Pinacles, and in a vain-glorious Bravado cried out, *This is Great Babylon that I have built:* This goodly Structure was rais'd by my Command, this ſtately Fabrick owes all its Strength and Beauty to my Art, to my Study of Glory, and my Reſolves to atchieve greater Things than any others dare undertake. And I intend that the *Aſſyrian* Monarchy ſhall riſe proportionably to theſe Heights. When this proud King thus forgot, if not defied, Heaven, and would not take Notice who was above him, or, if he did, ſcorn'd to veil all his Grandeur to him, then it was fit he ſhould be made to know that *the moſt High ruleth over the Children of Men*, and that there is *a God that judgeth on the Earth*, as well as diſplays his Glory in the Heavens: And then it was that this proud Prince was thruſt down from his lofty Battlements, and turn'd out to Graſs with brute Beaſts: Thus that of the Pſalmiſt was verified, *Man being in Honour, and underſtanding not, becomes like the Beaſts that periſh.* When King *Herod* was cried up for a *God* by the People, and check'd not their impious Flattery, but was pleas'd with it, and was proud of his being thus applauded, yea, deified by the Rabble, the evangelical Hiſtory informs us how tragical the Cloſe of that Applauſe was. And in other Inſtances (as *Senacherib*, *Antiochus*, and ſome of the *Roman* Emperors) we are taught how Pride hath been ſignally puniſh'd, how fatal and deſtructive it hath prov'd.

6thly, POVERTY of Spirit, in its own Nature, is ever accompanied with Quietneſs and Serenity of Mind, and Peace of Conſcience, and in this Reſpect carries *Bleſſedneſs* with it. It keeps Men from fretting and envying, and from all Thoughts of Revenge, which make their Lives ſo uneaſy. Pride is the Mother of Diſcontent, Impatience and Murmuring: For they who have too high an Eſteem of themſelves are never ſatisfy'd, and tho' you undertake to reward them, yet they never think they are recompenſed according to their Worth. This and many other Diſturbances in their Minds make them fly out into Paſſion and Rage, and they become troubleſome to themſelves and others. Hereby they are made unfit for Commerce and humane Society, as *Nebuchadnezzer*'s Pride juſtly thruſt him out among the Beaſts. Humility is the Sobriety of the Mind, but Pride is Drunkenneſs and Intoxication, and brings with it Diſorder, Diſquiet and Tumult. The humble Man enjoys God and himſelf, and nothing comes amiſs to him. I appeal to you whether this doth not approach very near to the *Bleſſedneſs* in the higheſt Heavens.

WHICH is the next thing to be conſidered, and is contain'd in thoſe Words, *Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*, for the higheſt Meaning of that Expreſſion is that *theirs is everlaſting Life and Glory:* They ſhall not only be bleſſed in this World but in that which is to come. *Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven* is as much as if it had been ſaid, Humility is the true Way to eternal Happineſs. Here take Notice of the Excellency of this Grace: It fits us for Heaven, it prepares us for the Manſions of the bleſſed. Whereas *the proud in Spirit* are the moſt unlikely, of all Men, to enter into that Place of Bliſs.

OBSERVE how the Reward anſwers to the Grace, Poverty is recompenſed with a Kingdom, Humility with a Crown. Poor-ſpirited Men do not uſe to purchaſe Kingdoms and Scepters here on Earth: But you ſee what *thoſe* whom our Saviour ſpeaks of ſhall arrive unto in Heaven. A good Man indeed would chooſe to be humble, tho' there were no *Heaven* to reward him, but this being promis'd and aſſured him, he hath much more Reaſon to be ſo. This ample Recompence ſhould encourage the Followers of Chriſt, for if *Heaven* cannot bribe us, nothing elſe is able to do it. If this be not a powerful Incentive to *Humility*, it will be impoſſible to tell what is.

THERE remains now the third and laſt Part of my Task, which is to ſhew you *how we may attain* to this Poverty of Spirit, which is ſo excellent an Accompliſhment of Chriſtians, and hath Bleſſedneſs attending on it here, and following it hereafter. In order to this 1. You muſt make Uſe of ſome *Principles*, and be thoroughly perſuaded of them, and meditate upon them. 2. You muſt attend to ſome *Rules*, and ſeriouſly practiſe them.

THE things that you ought always to meditate upon are theſe which follow, 1. The Nature of God, and our Relation to him, or, which is all one, God's Nature and ours. 2. We are to conſider our own Nature by itſelf. 3. Let us meditate on the Excellency of this Grace of Humility. 4. We ſhould contemplate and ſtudy the Example of our Saviour.

Firſt, I SAY, let us conſider the *Nature of God* and *ours together*. He is our Creator, and we are his Creatures. He made us, both Bodies and Souls, out of nothing: This was our firſt Original, and the Conſideration of it ought to confound the Pride of Men. For hereby we are taught the infinite and unſpeakable Diſtance which is between God and us, and we are to conceive of him as exiſting of himſelf, and giving Exiſtence to all other things, and on that Account having a ſovereign Authority and abſolute Empire over them, and particularly having the ſole Right in Mankind, all Power and Dominion over us. This ſhould teach us *Humility*. Again, let it be conſider'd that God not only gave us our Being but preſerves and ſuſtains us in it. Every Moment we depend upon him, and ſubſiſt by him, and without his Maintenency we ſhould fall back into nothing. A Creature, as it made not itſelf, ſo it can't uphold itſelf. Hence we may be convinced how unreaſonable it is to have high Thoughts of ourſelves. Again, we may conſider what mean Returns we are able to make unto God, notwithſtanding we are ſo deeply indebted to him, and are continually receiving from him. We have nothing worth his Acceptance to repay his Love with: But we run ſtill upon the Score, and enhanſe our Debt, and are never like to make Satisfaction. Yea, there is another Debt, that of our Treſpaſſes, which we are daily contracting, and every Minute adding to. Think of theſe things, and be thence convinced what Reaſon you have to take St. *James*'s Advice, that is, to *ſubmit yourſelves to God*, Jam. iv. 7. To cheriſh the moſt profound Humility, to have always high and reverend Thoughts of God, and very mean and low ones of yourſelves.

Secondly, Conſider your *own Nature and Condition by itſelf*. And firſt begin with your *Bodies*: For on theſe you may read to yourſelves a Lecture of Humility. Theſe are of the ſame Extract with the Bodies of all other Creatures. You do not excel the moſt deſpicable Animals, as to the general Matter you are made of, for you were all from the Earth. In that Reſpect the meaneſt Creature is as good as Man, who is but walking Earth and breathing Clay. And why ſhould this Earth-born Creature be proud and haughty? Why doth he fall out with his Fellow-creatures, yea fight with his Maker, and exalt himſelf above Heaven? One would think that, when he reflects on his Original, he ſhould humble himſelf in Duſt and Aſhes: And much more when he conſiders that within a few Years he ſhall relapſe into his firſt State, according to the Doom which at firſt paſt upon him, *Duſt thou art, and unto Duſt thou ſhalt return*, Gen. iii. 19. Here is the Sum of all the natural Philoſophy about humane Bodies. Of the Earth they were firſt framed, and into Earth they muſt at laſt be changed. He that is embalm'd with the greateſt Coſt, and then cover'd with Marble, ſhall be reſolv'd into theſe Principles as effectually (tho' not ſo ſpeedily) as he that is lodg'd in the Grave without Art, and hath no other Covering but Clods. We may well then ask that Queſtion, *Why is Earth and Aſhes proud?* Eccl. x. 9. That it may never be ask'd concerning *You*, take this Courſe, look to the Earth whence you were taken, and to the Earth where you muſt be laid, and both or either of theſe will be ſerviceable to damp your Pride. Your Original and your End forbid you to be haughty.

HAVING thus conſider'd your Bodies, proceed in the next Place to think of the other Moiety, your *Souls*, and the Contemplation of theſe will further teach you Humility. You muſt remember then that all Souls are alike, as to their natural Make and Subſtance. The Courtier and the Clown, the ſcarlet Doctor and the deſpiſed Idiot in his party-colour'd Coat are equal, as to this. Their Souls are only differenc'd by a happier Frame and Temper of Body, by Organs better fitted for the Soul's Operation; as alſo by outward Helps and Aſſiſtances, as the Means of cultivating and improving the Mind; but eſpecially by the Grace of God. But where there is this Difference, yet ſtill the Faculties of the moſt improved Souls are ſhort and deficient. They know but in Part, they attain but to a few Notions, and they have very imperfect Repreſentations of things. If we ſeriouſly meditate on this, it will inſpire us with Humility. But if we conſider that our Souls are defiled with Sin, we ſhall have more abundant Reaſon to diſcard all Pride and Arrogance. When we reflect on the Original Pollution of our Minds, and how that hath infected our Lives and Manners, we ſhall have juſt Cauſe to humble ourſelves. *We are all as an unclean thing, and our Righteouſneſſes are as filthy Rags*, Iſai. lxiv. 6. Is it not a monſtrous thing to be proud of Rags, yea of filthy Rags? Can the Leper take any Pleaſure in viewing himſelf and the contagious Scurf on his Body? We are thoſe Perſons who are over-ſpread with the worſt of Leproſies, even that which makes us loathſome in the Eyes of God: And this ſhould make us ſo in our own Eyes, but it can never be an Incentive to Pride and Self-conceit. Thus I have briefly hinted how we are to underſtand ourſelves aright, and to know what we are both as to our Bodies and our Souls, to be apprehenſive how infirm and how ſinful Creatures we are; and upon theſe and all the foregoing Conſiderations we ought to be humble.

THE third thing you are to meditate on is the *Excellency* and *Lovelineſs of this Grace*. Think how commendable it is in the Sight of God. *Tho' the Lord be high, yet hath he reſpect unto the lowly*, Pſal. cxxxviii. 6. *He giveth Grace to the humble*, Jam. iv. 6. *God reſiſteth the proud, but giveth Grace to the humble*, 1 Pet. v. 5. Again, conſider that this Grace is moſt commendable in the Eyes of Men likewiſe. They all love Humility, and hate Pride in others, even thoſe who are proud themſelves. This is very remarkable: Whereas one Drunkard loves another, one laſcivious and unclean Perſon delights in the Society of ſuch as himſelf: And ſo you may pronounce of other Sinners. But always you will find it true that one proud Man ſcorns, yea abhors another. This indeed is the peculiar Curſe on this Rank of Sinners. And if they be hated of proud Men, you may conclude that they are loath'd of all Men beſides. This appears in Mens expoſing this Sort of Sinners to Contempt, making good the Wiſe-man's Words, *When Pride cometh, then cometh Shame.* And truly 'tis fit that thoſe who exalt themſelves ſhould be debaſed, that Diſeſteem and Undervaluing ſhould be the Recompence of their over-valuiug themſelves, and diſeſteeming others. It is congruous that the proud Man who in his own Conceit is greater than all Men, and leſs only than his own Thoughts, ſhould be a very diminuitive Creature in the Thoughts of others. He therefore, that would be eſteem'd and lov'd, is engag'd to practiſe the contrary Virtue of Humility, for this is reverenc'd and prais'd by all Men, even by thoſe that never practiſe it: And it muſt needs be ſo, becauſe of the intrinſick Worth and Excellency of this Grace. It is lovely in itſelf, and thro' its own innate Goodneſs commands Reſpect and Love from all Men. Which is the thing I offer to your Conſideration as an Argument to excite you to Humility.

Fourthly, MEDITATE often on that *great and illuſtrious Exemplar* of Humility, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Didſt thou, O bleſſed Saviour, condeſcend to take our Nature upon thee, and was thy whole Life one great Act of Humiliation,

miliation, and didſt thou humble thy ſelf to the Death of the Croſs? And ſhall not I, for whoſe Sake all this was done and ſuffer'd, give Proof of a humble and ſubmiſſive Spirit? Shall I not thro' my whole Life imitate this humble Saviour? Yes, this is my Duty and my Intereſt. I will therefore ſet this Pattern before my Eyes, and bear this ever in my Mind, that Pride in him, who calls himſelf a *Chriſtian*, is more intolerable than in any Sort of Men, becauſe the Author of the chriſtian Religion was ſo humble.

WHEN you have well concocted theſe things in your deeper Thoughts and Meditations, I deſire you to attend to theſe three *Directions*,

1. BEWARE of Sycophants and Flatterers. They will poſſeſs you with ſtrange Conceits of yourſelves, they will proclaim in your Ears your Praiſes and your Worth, which they will tell you is the Occaſion of theſe. But carefully ſhun ſuch Perſons, and delight not to be cried up and preſented with large Commendations and Panegyricks. Be acquainted with yourſelves, live at Home, and value not yourſelves upon the Characters that others faſten on you, leſt thereby you nouriſh Self-conceit and Vain-glory. Affect not Acclamations, but rather diſreliſh them. Reſt ſatisfied that you are good, and be contented tho' others do not extol you for it. In ſhort, labour to arrive to this, not to be touch'd with the Praiſe and Applauſe of Men: For if you be not proud already, theſe will make you ſo.

2. BE not ambitious of wordly Grandeur and Pomp, for theſe generally breed an Elation of Mind, and cauſe Men to entertain very unbecoming Thoughts of themſelves and of their Condition. Remember this that all thoſe *Garments* and *Branches of Palm-trees* which were ſo officiouſly brought forth at Chriſt's Riding into *Jeruſalem*, were placed *under his Feet*. Thus let all worldly Complacencies, all Palms and Laurels, all triumphal Ovations be valued by us at a *low Rate* always, and ſometimes even trampled *under Feet*. Uſe yourſelves to Self-denial and a Contempt of earthly Greatneſs, and ſo you will entirely preſerve in you a Stock of Humility and Poverty of Spirit.

3. STIFLE the Noiſe and Applauſe of the World with your own ſad Murmurs and Exclamations of Sorrow, for the Failings which you know yourſelves guilty of. Allay your Pride by ſome ſuch Expedient as this, which I have read a good Man made uſe of: When he had gain'd a great Name, and as great a Love from all Men, he told an intimate Friend that if the Country knew as much of him as he did himſelf, they would not have ſo great an Admiration and Reſpect for him. Thus the Conſciouſneſs of your private Defects and vicious Inclinations may ſerve to ſtifle your arrogant and proud Conceits of yourſelves. In the midſt of your Applauſes whiſper this in your own Ears, that you are ſenſible of your great Guilt, and that you know yourſelves to be vile Sinners: And particularly urge upon your Thoughts thoſe Offences which none, but your own Conſciences, are privy to. Receive this as a moſt certain Truth, that no Man is proud but he that knows not himſelf. If we did frequently deſcend into ourſelves, and ſtrictly examine our Lives and Actions, we ſhould ſoon eſpy enough to make us humble.

THE SECOND BEATITUDE OF SPIRITUAL MOURNING.

MATT. V. 4.

Bleſſed are they that Mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.

IN this Beatitude, there are theſe three Things to be taken notice of, 1. A Chriſtian and Evangelical Duty offer'd to our Practice, and that is *Mourning*. 2. A preſent Happineſs accompanying that Duty, they are *Bleſſed*. 3. A future Reward following it, *they ſhall be comforted*. I begin with the Duty, and here I am to ſhew, what this *Mourning* is which our Saviour aſſures us, gives a Title to Bleſſedneſs. Let me premiſe then, that there is firſt a *natural Mourning*, I mean that which the very Frame and Conſtitution of our Natures prompts us to, as when we are grieved with Pain and Diſeaſes, with worldly Loſſes and Diſappointments, with outward Diſtreſſes and Calamities. And the dolorous Reſentments which we feel on this Account, if they be not immoderate and exceſſive, are to be reckoned as innocent and harmleſs, becauſe they are the Reſult of thoſe Impreſſions and Inclinations which God hath ſettled in our Natures. *Secondly*, There is a *carnal* and *ſinful Mourning*, which can by no Means be allowed of, it being the Fruit of a moſt corrupted and debauched Mind. Examples of this are daily before our Eyes; Sinners are unſpeakably vexed and grieved, when they are reſtrain'd from acting and executing their wicked Purpoſes. As the free Commiſſion of Vice makes them glad, ſo you may find them in a ſorrowful and dejected Poſture, when they are hinder'd from the accompliſhing their ungodly Deſigns. *Thirdly*, There is a *ſpiritual* and *ſanctified Mourning*, a *Sorrow according to God*, as the Apoſtle ſtiles it, in Oppoſition to the *Sorrow according to the World*, 2 Cor. vii. 10. This godly Sorrow is the Character of a truly pious Soul, and is that evangelical Endowment which the Text preſents us with.

I KNOW ſome *Expoſitors*, and *Grotius* among the reſt, interpret theſe Words, concerning thoſe who ſuffer the Evils of Puniſhment, and ſo look upon this *Mourning* as ſomething paſſive; as if theſe Words of Chriſt, *Bleſſed are they that Mourn*, were the ſame with thoſe of *Eliphaz*, Job. v. 17. *Happy is the Man whom God correcteth*; or as if they ſpoke the Senſe of St. *James*, Chap. i. Ver. 12.

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Bleſſed is the Man that endureth Temptation. But I conceive, that this Mourning belongs rather to the laſt Beatitude, *Bleſſed are thoſe that are perſecuted*; thoſe that labour under all Manner of outward and temporal Calamities. I cannot therefore ſuppoſe (as I ſaid in the foregoing Diſcourſe) that our Saviour would be guilty of ſo groſs a *Tautology*, as to reckon the ſame Beatitude twice, eſpecially having interpoſed ſome others of a different Nature and Quality. In Contradiſtinction then to the *paſſive Mourning*, there is another which I may call *active*, it being a voluntary Act and Exertment of out own. If you would know the true Nature of it, theſe two Particulars will inform you: 1. The Mourning, to which Bleſſedneſs is here here adjoined, is Mourning for Sin; *firſt* for our *own* Miſcarriages, and then for the Offences of *others*. 2. This Mourning is for the doleful Conſequences of both.

Firſt, THIS Mourning is for our *own Sins*, and that not only for the actual Tranſgreſſions of our Lives, but for the inward Depravity and Defilement of our Natures. This latter being the Spring and Source of the former, we are to lay it to Heart; we ought to lament the evil Motions and Propenſions of our Minds, and the Inclination of our whole Man to the Commiſſion of Sin, and the Violation of God's Laws. It is the conſtant Grief of a holy Man that he finds ſuch Effects as theſe of his natural Corruption, namely, ſometimes a ſtrange Coldneſs and Stupidity invades him, he becomes dull an unactive, careleſs and benummed, he cannot pray with any Zeal and Fervency, with any Senſe of his Sins and Wants; he cannot hear the Word of God with Delight and Complacency; every vain Object diverts his Thoughts, and diſcompoſes his Mind. Sometimes he finds no Reliſh and Savour of the Pleaſures of another World, he is not affected with the Mercies of God towards him; he doth not reſent the Bleſſings which the divine Goodneſs confers upon him, he doth not tremble at the Judgments of God in the World. Sometimes the Nature of Sin is not repreſented to him ſo loathſome as indeed it is. Oftentimes he is ſhaken in his Reſolves and Purpoſes, and all his former Intentions and Enterprizes are ineffectual. The natural Adherence of Concupiſcence will not ſuffer him to diſcern thoſe Evidences of Holineſs, and thoſe Proofs of the Spirit of God abiding in him, which he is deſirous to find. This cauſes him to ſpeak the Language of the Apoſtle, *O wretched Man that I am! Who ſhall deliver me from the Body of this Death?* I am a poor diſtreſſed Captive, who ſhall redeem me? I am ſhut up in this ſinful Carcaſs, as in cloſe Durance, who ſhall ſet me free? Thus we are to bewail our Vaſſalage and Captivity, and with the deepeſt Sorrow to be apprehenſive of that original Pollution wherewith we are all defiled, weaken'd, and diſabled.

MUCH more are we to be concerned for the actual Offences, Tranſgreſſions, and Miſcarriages of our Lives: Theſe call for ſevere Remorſe and Trouble of Soul. O how unworthy hath our Demeanour been towards our great Benefactor, towards our loving and merciful Father, towards our gracious Redeemer! Alas! How many Ways have we tranſgreſſed the divine Commands? In how many and various Inſtances have we provoked the Majeſty of Heaven, and diſhonoured our Profeſſion, and diſgraced that holy Name by which we are called, and abuſed God's Mercy and long Suffering towards us, and grieved the holy Spirit? How can we reflect on theſe Things, but with hearty Sorrow and Lamentation, with a bitter Senſe of our Sins, and a high Diſpleaſure againſt them, and a perfect Abhorrence of them? And this we muſt be careful to remember, that our Mourning for our Sins muſt be chatholick and impartial; we muſt grieve for all our Offences, of what Nature, Quality, or Kind ſoever. And this we ſhall certainly do if we grieve for Sin, as it is an Offence againſt God, and as it is evil in itſelf, for all Sins are ſuch. Therefore our Sorrow cannot but be univerſal, if it be true and real. But becauſe under the Subject of *Repentance*, I ſhall largely ſpeak of *Mourning for our own Sins*, (which is the proper Work of Repentance) I ſhall not now inſiſt upon it, but proceed to

THE *Second* Particular compriſed in the *Spiritual Mourning*, and that is *Mourning for others Sins*, according to the Expoſition of St. *Jerom* and *Theophylact* on this Beatitude. The Propoſition then which I ſhall enlarge upon is this, that we are obliged to lay to Heart, and mourn for the Sins of others. The ſacred Hiſtory informs us, that this was the uſual Practice of holy Men. Of *Lot* it is recorded *that he was vexed with the filthy Converſation of the Wicked, for that* *righteous Man dwelling among them, in ſeeing and hearing, vexed his righteous Soul from Day to Day with their unlawful Deeds.* What Grief and Indignation filled the Breaſt of the meekeſt Man on Earth, when he beheld the ſtrange and prodigious Idolatry of the *Iſraelites*, in making and worſhipping a Calf? Read how deeply *Ezra*, that great Reformer of the *Jewiſh* People, was affected, when he was acquainted with their abominable Revolting, and making Affinity with the neighbouring Heathens. *When I heard this Thing*, ſaith he, *I rent my Garment and my Mantle, and plucked off the Hair of my Head, and of my Beard, and ſat down aſtoniſhed*, Ezr. ix. 3. And obſerve the pious Reſolve of the weeping Prophet *Jeremy*; after he had foretold the Judgments which ſhould befall the *Jewiſh* Nation, unleſs they prevented them by ſpeedy Repentance, he declares for his Part, that *if they will not hear, his Soul ſhall weep in ſecret Places for their Pride*, Jer. xiii. 17. Whilſt they are openly offending God, he will in private lament it. But none is more eminent for this, than the pious *Pſalmiſt*, *Horrour*, ſaith he, *hath taken hold upon me, becauſe of the wicked that forſake thy Law*, Pſal. cxix. 53. And again, Ver. 158. *I beheld the Tranſgreſſors, and was grieved, becauſe they kept not thy Word.* Many *behold* the Tranſgreſſors, and rejoice at their evil Doings: Many *behold* them, and moſt willingly and readily imitate them; but the holy *Pſalmiſt* beholds them and grieves, beholds and weeps, and weeps abundantly, as we learn from *Ver.* 136. *Rivers of Waters run down mine Eyes, becauſe they keep not thy Law.* That Men could not be prevailed with to ſtudy and practiſe God's Law, but that, on the contrary, they lived in the continual Violation of it, is the Thing which this good Man here lays to Heart: And his Reſentment is ſo great, his Grief is ſo ſtrong and violent, that it breaks forth into a Torrent of Tears.

In the New Teſtament I will ſingle out St. *Paul*, as an eminent Example of this *Mourning* which I am ſpeaking of. How paſſionately did he reſent the ſinful Manners and Behaviour of the *Philippians*? He could not write to them without mingling Tears with his Ink, *Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the Enemies of the Croſs of Chriſt.* Phil. iii. 18. And how zealous a Sorrow is that which he expreſſes towards his unbelieving Countrymen. *Rom.* ix. 2, 3. *I have great Heavineſs and continual Sorrow in my Heart for you; for I could wiſh that my ſelf were accurſed from Chriſt, for my Brethren, my Kinſmen according to the Fleſh.* Again, 2 Cor. 11. 29. *Who is offended, and I burn not?* ſaith this great Lover of Mens Souls. If any Man, ſaith he, be fallen into Sin, or fallen off from his Courſe of Virtue, by imitating others ſinful Examples, I forthwith find an unſpeakable Trouble in my Mind, and am inflamed with an eager Deſire of helping him out of that miſerable Condition. This ſavours of a true godly Spirit.

If you would be acquainted with the *Reaſons* why we ought to be thus affected, they are ſuch as theſe, which I will but briefly enmerate. *Firſt*, If there be great *Joy* at the Converſion of a Sinner, ſo great, that the very Angels intereſt themſelves in it, certainly there muſt be a reſembling *Grief* for the rebellious Practices of thoſe that perſiſt in their Sins. *Secondly*, We are obliged to mourn for other Mens Sins, becauſe they have the ſame Contrariety to God and his holy Nature that our Sins have here, and conſequently are equally abhorred by God. *Thirdly*, The Sins and Enormities of others will aſſuredly bring down Judgments upon *us*, if we are not careful to grieve for them. *Fourthly*, *We* have been ſome Ways acceſſary to the Sins of others, and therefore are concerned to lament for them. How many have we encouraged to do what is unlawful by our Silence and Connivance, by our Want of ſeaſonable Reproof and Admonition? How many have been emboldened to Sin by our bad Example? So that by this and the like Ways, we are become Joint-Offenders with them, on which Account our Remorſe and Sorrow are very requiſite. *Fifthly*, This is one great Character of a real Chriſtian that he is inwardly touched with the Senſe of other Mens Miſcarriages. There have been many *Hypocrites* that have feigned a Grief for their own Sins; for they thought it would be taken notice of in the World if they did not counterfeit ſome Regret for theſe: But we never read that any Hypocrite and ungodly Man wept for other Mens Sins. This is a certain Token and Aſſurance of the Sincerity and Uprightneſs of our Hearts.

Laſtly, OUR Mourning for *others* Sins may be one Means to bring *them* to mourn for themſelves. When they ſhall obſerve *us* affected with what they have done, they may happily be wrought upon to conſider ſeriouſly how much more they ought to be moved themſelves. We may imagine ſome ſoften'd and relenting Sinner to reflect after *this* Manner upon others Mourning for his Sins, What is that which I have done? How have I behaved my ſelf? All good Men look upon me with Tears, and utter their Words to me with Sighs. Am I the Cauſe of this? Yes, I ſee I am? How evil then is my Condition? Theſe good Men wou'd not pity and bewail my Caſe, unleſs it was deplorable and miſerable. And if *they* bewail it, I am ſure I have much more Reaſonto do it myſelf, who (ungrateful Wretch) have perſiſted ſo long in my Sins, and have thereby diſhonour'd my God, and endanger'd my Soul. But lo, I relent, I melt into Tears, I feel the overcoming Vertue of divine Grace, I humbly implore Mercy, I take Sanctuary in the Croſs of Chriſt, I fly to the Blood of Jeſus, who is the Author of eternal Salvation to all thoſe that believe in him and renounce their Sins.

THIS may convince you how *reaſonable* it is to mourn for the Sins of others. But I have not yet finiſh'd this Head. There are other *Grounds* and *Reaſons* why we ſhould think ourſelves concern'd in this Duty, and that 1. In reſpect of God. 2. Of the Sinners we converſe with. 3. Of ourſelves.

Firſt, LET it be thought of ſeriouſly, that God the Father is grieved for the Sins of Men. How amazing is that which I read in Gen. vi. 6? *It repented the Lord that he had made Man on the Earth, and it griev'd him at his Heart.* With holy Reverence muſt ſuch Paſſages of Scripture be read and underſtood: Tho' they be ſpoken after the Manner of Men, yet they muſt be interpreted in a Senſe worthy of God. And the Evangeliſt tells us that the Son of God was *grieved for the Hardneſs of Mens Hearts*, Mark iii. 5. It was the ſame Cauſe which made him weep over *Jeruſalem*, tho' in thoſe Tears likewiſe he had a particular Eye to the dreadful Judgments which were impendent over that City. And the *Holy Spirit* of God alſo is *grieved* by every wilful Sin, *Eph.* iv. 3[illegible] Thus the whole Bleſſed Trinity is ſaid, in the Stile of Scripture, to be griev'd for the Sins of Men: And ſhall not *we*, we who lie under ſo much Guilt ourſelves? If Sin be ſo offenſive to *God*, is there not much more Reaſon it ſhould be ſo to *us?*

Again, IT is fit we ſhould be deeply affected with the Conſideration of other Mens Tranſgreſſions, and that in reſpect of *God*, becauſe their Contempt and Violation of the divine Laws is a Diſhonour to the Law-giver himſelf. *Thro' breaking the Law diſhonoureſt thou God?* Saith the Apoſtle *Rom.* ii. 23. The *Name of God is blaſphem'd among the Gentiles thro' you*, v. 24. What faithful Servant is there that *grieves* not to hear his Maſter reproach'd? What dutiful Child can without Regret hear his Father diſgraced? What good Subject can endure that his Sovereign ſhould be deſpis'd and vilified? GOD is our Maſter, our Father, our King: His *Glory* ſhould be more dear to us than our Lives: And 'tis certain that nothing doth or can impair *That*, but Sin only, ſhall we not then *Mourn* for it?

Secondly, IN reſpect of *Sinners themſelves*, this Duty will be found to be very requiſite. Weigh well their ſad Eſtate, and you will diſcern them to be the Objects of your greateſt Grief. Man in his Creation was honourable, having God's Image imprinted, and his Law engraven in his inward Parts, his Underſtanding being endued with a ſufficient Light to diſtinguiſh between Good and Evil, and his Will and Affections rightly diſpos'd to purſue the Good and avoid the Evil. But how ſad and deplorable is it to ſee this Creature, made but a little lower than the glorious Order of Angelical Spirits, become now like the Beaſts that periſh? To behold ſo excellent a Piece of God's Workmanſhip defaced, to view the Devil's Shape and Image in the Place of God's, to look upon Man ſo blinded that he cannot ſee the things that belong to his Peace, and ſo ſottiſh and froward that he will not proſecute them; to obſerve this, and to take notice of the Lives of ſo great Numbers of Men that live without all Fear of God and Impreſſions of Goodneſs on their Minds, this cannot but be ſad and uncomfortable, and go near to a good Man's Heart.

SINNERS are Strangers and Aliens to God, Perſons that are gone aſtray, and have left the right and ſafe Path, and are thereby become obnoxious to all Dangers and Miſeries. The natural Iſſue of Sin is Diſtreſs: The conſtant Attendants of it are the Curſe of God, Horrour of Conſcience, Deſpair, Death and Hell. If we ſee a Man bereft of his Wits, and offering Violence to himſelf, are not our Hearts affected at it? It is equally true that the Tranſgreſſors of God's Laws are Phrentick and beſides themſelves, and they intend nothing but Miſchief to themſelves: They run into the Fire, they caſt themſelves headlong into everlaſting Burnings. If we have any Bowels of Pity and Compaſſion, let us exert them here. We reſent the Condition of poor Captives and Slaves, and pity their Miſeries: But we ſhould think of this that Sinners are the worſt of Slaves, *ſold under Sin:* And their Bonds and Shackles are more intolerable. We need no Arguments to perſuade us to mourn for the Dead: The Perſons, I'm ſpeaking of, are all dead Men, *dead* in *Treſpaſſes and Sins:* And this Death renders them inſenſible of all their Miſery, which is the greateſt Enhanſement of it. But *we* ought to be ſenſible, ſeeing *they* are not, and we ſhould follow the Advice of that wiſe Writer, *Weep for the Fool, for the Life of the Fool is worſe than Death*, Eccleſ. xxi. 11.

Thirdly, IF we have any Pity for *ourſelves*, if we love our own Welfare, if we tender our own Good, we are oblig'd to pity, and mourn for the wicked. We muſt know then that if we do not this, we do in part transfer their Guilt upon ourſelves; as on the contrary, we take the right Way to divert both the Guilt and Puniſhment. Thus, in the great and general Overthrow of the Jewiſh People a *Remnant* was to be ſaved, and what the Condition of that Deliverance was we are told in Ezek. ix. 4. *The Lord ſaid, go thro' the midſt of the City, thro' the midſt of Jeruſalem, and ſet a Mark upon the Foreheads of the Men that Sigh and that Cry for all the Abominations that be done in the midſt thereof.* Thoſe that ſigh and cry, and mourn for the Sins of the Publick, have the Mark of Preſervation and Safety ſtamp'd upon them. *Lot* who was vex'd and griev'd for the Iniquities of *Sodom* eſcaped the fiery Vengeance, and was conducted by Angels to a Place of Refuge. Thus it is our Intereſt to be affected with the Miſcariages and Offences of others: And upon all other Accounts I have ſhew'd that this becomes our Duty.

WE are call'd in the next Place to a *ſecond* Sort of *ſpiritual Mourning*, namely, for the *ſad Effects and Conſequences of Sin*, that is, the Afflictions and Troubles of this Life which befal others for their Sins. That theſe are a juſt Cauſe of Mourning, we learn from the Examples of the holieſt Men. *Did not I weep*, ſaith *Job*, *for him that is in Trouble? Was not my Soul grieved for the Poor?* Job xxx. 25. We are by the Laws of Religion engag'd to grieve for the Miſeries that are inflicted on others, to join our Lamentations with thoſe that groan under the Preſſures of this World. Eſpecially, we ought to mourn for the Calamities of the *Church*, and commiſerate the Sufferings of *Sion.* There are many noble Examples of this Kind that call for our Imitation. We read that when the ſad News of the Ark being taken came to the Ears of that good Woman, *Phineas*'s Wife, the natural and in-bred Compaſſion of her Sex was turn'd into a divine Affection; and how paſſionately ſhe reſented the Church's Miſery we may read in the *Name* that ſhe gave her Child, when ſhe was dying, a Name which carried the Church's Departure and Funeral in it. And do we not remember how her Father in Law, good old *Eli*, upon the Tidings being brought him that *the Ark of God was taken* by the inſulting Enemy, thought it not worth the while to ſtay in the World, and linger out a tedious Life. *The Glory is departed*, and you hear the ſame of him too. His Heart was firſt broken with Grief, and then, being aged and crazy, he fell back from his Seat, and his Neck was broken with the Fall. Let no Man judge him for that ſad Accident, but rather think the brave Temper of this Holy Man is worth our Imitation, who was ſo deeply affected with the Calamities of the Church.

THE excellent Words of *Uriah* (to mention him next) are remarkable, and teſtify what a publick Spirit he was of; *The Ark and Iſrael*, ſaith he, *and Judah abide in Tents: Shall I then go unto my Houſe, to eat and drink*, &c. The publick Fate of the *Church* (for he mentions the *Ark* firſt) was a ſufficient Byaſs to divert his domeſtick Concerns. The common Danger was an Interdiction to his private Pleaſures.

THE noble Spirit of *Nehemiah* may entertain your Thoughts in the next Place. He was an eminent Mourner for the Troubles of the Church. Though he was a Courtier, and in great Favour with *Artaxerxes* the *Perſian* Monarch; yet when the ſad Tidings of the Afflictions of God's Servants *at Jeruſalem* were brought to him, *he Wept and Mourned*, yea, though that great Monarch was preſent, and might have awed his Tears. It was an unuſual Thing to be ſad and penſive in the royal Preſence. You read therefore that the King took Notice of his mournful Poſtures, Neh. ii. 2. *Why is thy Countenance ſad*? The Anſwer to it follows in the next Verſe, *Why ſhould not my Countenance be ſad, when the City, the Place of my Fathers Sepulchres, lieth waſt, and the Gates thereof are conſumed with Fire?* How can I tell ſuch a ſad Story (ſaith he) with dry Eyes? This made him dejected and melancholick even in the King's Preſence, and in the royal Palace. And, till the publick Condition of the Church was altered and amended, he could not find any Matter of Joy and Pleaſure.

AND this likewiſe was the Practice of *Daniel*, who though he was in great Proſperity under King *Darius*, yet would let no *pleaſant Bread or Wine come into his Mouth for 3 Weeks*; as you read in the Book of *Daniel*, where you may meet with other Inſtances of his Mourning for the afflicted State of God's People in the Captivity. How affectionately did the weeping Prophet *Jeremiah* lament the Diſtreſſes of the Jewiſh Church, Lam. ii. 11. *Mine Eyes do fail with Tears, my Bowels are troubled, my Liver is poured upon the Earth, for the Deſtruction of the Daughter of my People.* And ſtill, as if he had not wept enough, he cries out; *O that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that I might weep Day and Night for the ſlain of the Daughters of People.* This puts him as 'twere into a Fit of the Cholick, and crying out, *My Bowels, my Bowels!* Jer. iv. 19.

THE ſorrowful Reſentments of the poor *Captive Jews* are thus prophetically ſet down in *Pſal.* 137. 1, 2. *By the Rivers of Babylon we ſat down, yea we Wept when we remembred Sion: We hanged our Harps on the Willows in the midſt thereof.* To ſit by the Rivers of *Babylon, i. e.* on the Banks of *Tigris* and *Euphrates*, the forlorn Seats of their Baniſhment, was Temptation ſufficient to Weep, and to augment thoſe Waters by theſe which were ſo apt to ſtream from their Eyes. Their calling to mind the afflicted Condition of the Church, of which they were a Part, eaſily fetch'd Tears from them, and cauſed them to lay aſide their Inſtruments of Mirth, and even to hang them on the mournful Willows. They could not without unſpeakable Regret hear the Taunts of their Enemies, when they call'd to them to ſing ſome of their ſacred Ditties. *How ſhall we ſing the Lord's Song in a ſtrange Land?* ſaid theſe diſtreſſed Captives. How improper, nay, how impoſſible is it to rejoice when *Iſrael*'s Condition is ſo deplorable? Theſe and ſeveral other Examples, which might be produced out of the ſacred Records, are to be imitated by us; eſpecially, when we ſee that the Calamity is grown common, we ought to join our Tears, and lament in Conſert, taking up the Prophet *Jeremiah*'s doleful Note, *O that our Heads were Waters, and our Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that we might Weep Day and Night for the diſtreſs'd and afflicted of the Daughter of our People!*

I need not take Pains to ſhew the *Reaſonableneſs* of this, it being ſo plain and obvious. Theſe two things I will barely mention: Firſt, Our *Love to our Brethren* (which is an abſolute Command left us by Chriſt) renders it neceſſary for us to compaſſionate them, and to condole their Miſeries. Secondly, the *Sympathy* which is due to them, as they are our *Fellow-members*, requires this. Whence it appears that it is *Natural* as well as *Chriſtian* to mourn and grieve for the Evils that befal others. We ſhould think we hear our diſtreſſed Brethren call to us in the Language of the Church, *Is it nothing to you, all ye that paſs by? behold and ſee if there be any Sorrow like unto my Sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me, in the Day of his fierce Anger.* We muſt affectionately lay their Calamities to Heart, and *Weep with thoſe that Weep*, according to the Exhortation of the holy Apoſtle, *Rom.* xii. 15.

I SHOULD now proceed to ſpeak of the *Bleſſedneſs* which accompanies the Virtue of the Text; but there is an *Objection* lying in the Way, which I muſt firſt remove. How can *Mourning* be a Beatitude, when nothing is more oppoſite to *Happineſs* than *Sorrow*, which is the Attendant of *Miſery*? And the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture gives us a contrary Deſcription of *Bleſſedneſs*, when he acquaints us that *in God's Preſence* (which makes Heaven and Happineſs) *is Fulneſs* *of Joy, and at his right Hand there are Pleaſures for evermore.* And in other Places of Holy Writ, *Sorrow* and *Mourning* ſeem to be wholly excluded from the Nature of *Bliſs.*

I Anſwer, 1. It is true that *Perfect* and *compleat Happineſs* is excluſive of all Grief and Mourning, but ſuch is not the Happineſs of this Life, which is the thing we are ſpeaking of. 2. All Mourning is not Miſery and Unhappineſs; witneſs true and godly *Repentance* which is always accompanied with Sorrow and Trouble of Mind, witneſs the *Denial of ourſelves,* as to ſenſual and carnal Joy; witneſs the *Pains of Martyrdom,* and the Tortures that attend Perſecution for Righteouſneſs ſake. 3. I grant that Mourning is not ſimply Happineſs, but yet it makes Way for it. Spiritual Remorſe and Dolour are not preſcribed for themſelves abſolutely, but are in order to ſomething elſe. Sorrow is not commendable barely for its own ſake, and its intrinſick Worth, but becauſe it is a neceſſary Forerunner of true Repentance, as the Apoſtle aſſures us, *Godly Sorrow* (ſaith he *worketh Repentance unto Salvation,* and that Repentance (as he elegantly adds) is *without Repentance,* 2 Cor. vii. 10. A Man ſhall never be ſorry that this was wrought in him. Mourning is not requir'd for Mourning ſake, but for ſomething greater and higher. As the Chirurgeon ſearches into the Wound, not to make it ſmart, but to heal it: And as the Phyſician makes his Patient ſick, to cure and recover him. We may moreover conſider that this is the Nature of ſpiritual Grief to weaken Sin in us, to empty the Soul of Pride and Vanity, and to produce in us a Hatred and Loathing of them. Thus it is a moſt uſeful Medicine for the vanquiſhing of Vice. Beſides 4thly, conſidering our preſent State in this Life, and the Appointment and Allotment of divine Providence to us, this Duty is now become indiſpenſably requiſite. You may as well object againſt the ſad Occurrences and Calamities that happen in the World, and againſt the Permiſſion of Sin in it, as againſt a pious Sorrow and Reſentment, which is a natural Conſequent of them both. In brief, our Mourning conduces many Ways both to our *preſent* and *future* Felicity.

And that is the next thing I am to demonſtrate to you, that the Exerciſe of this excellent Grace doth always carry along with it a ſolid Happineſs. *Bleſſed are they that Mourn.* For 1. When they reflect on themſelves, and find that they are in the actual Diſcharge of their Duty, and are employ'd about that which God requires of them, they muſt needs feel a wonderful Complacency and Satisfaction in their Minds, there being an Agreement between the chriſtian Rule and their Practice. 2. The relying on the Promiſe of a future Reward is a preſent Happineſs: For it is the excellent and admirable Art of Faith to make things which are abſent, and at a Diſtance from us, to become really preſent.

Thus in general; but more particularly, godly Mourning carries with it a *preſent Bleſſedneſs,* becauſe 1. It argues a ſpiritual Inſight and Judgment, a right Diſcerning in us between Good and Evil, which certainly is ſuch an Attainment as may be reckon'd the Foundation of all virtuous and holy Living. 2. It is a Proof of the firſt and eſſential Principle of Godlineſs, namely, a Love of all Goodneſs, and a Hatred of whatever is contrary to Virtue, and to the pure Nature of God: For *Grief* always follows the Motion of our *Love* and *Hatred.* 3. It argues a tender Heart, and is in itſelf the beſt Antidote againſt a ſtupid and Lethargick *Temper,* which without doubt is the moſt dangerous and deſtructive Condition imaginable. The evangelical Mourning keeps us ſoft and pliable; it maintains in us a quick Senſe and Underſtanding of our Duty. 4. Hereby Sorrow is placed in its right Channel. It was the Saying of a Pious Man, that Sorrow is good for nothing but Sin. Nothing ſhould long grieve and trouble us but *This.* And the more we mourn for our Sins, the leſs ſhall we grieve for any thing elſe: On which Account our Minds will receive no ſmall Eaſe. 5. This is our Security and Safe-guard againſt diſſolute and extravagant Mirth, which we ſee ſo ſtrangely rifles and debauches the Spirits of Men. It is the beſt Preſervative againſt all lively and vain Tranſports of carnal Pleaſure. It takes off the Reliſh of wordly and ſenſual Joys, nay, it makes them become inſipid to our Palates, ſo that we ſhall eaſily refrain from them, and never be ſurfeited with them. This grave Tutor and Guardian ſhuts out all looſe and exorbitant Mirth, which is wont to deprave our Minds, and put them out of their ſtay'd and ſerious Poſture, and hinder us from minding the Concerns of a better Life. In a Word, the

Grace, which I have been, commending to you, is a certain and undeniable Argument of an excellent Temper of Mind, and is the Mother of a holy Life, and a Nouriſher of all the Graces of the Spirit. Whilſt we heartily grieve for Sin, we ſhall not commit it. Whilſt *Lot* was vex'd in his Soul for the ungodly Converſation of the *Sodomites*, he was ſufficiently guarded from the actual Pollution of it. All which being put together is ſufficient, I think, to prove the great *Advantage* and *Felicity* which we receive by the acting of this evangelical Grace of ſpiritual Mourning.

BUT this is not all: There is not only a *preſent* but a *future Happineſs*, which is the Reward of this Duty: *For they ſhall be Comforted*, they ſhall experience the Aids of the Holy Ghoſt who is the *Comforter*. Obſerve here, how proper the *Reward* is: The *Beatitude* is ſuitable to the *Grace*. As before a *Kingdom* was promis'd to *Poverty of Spirit*, ſo here *Comfort* to *Mourners*, than which nothing can be more welcome, and more ſeaſonable. And this future Recompence is twofold, either in this Life, *after* the Exerciſe of this Grace: Or in the other Life, in Glory. *They that ſow in Tears*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *ſhall reap in Joy*. Stay but till the Harveſt comes: You ſhall then ſee your Tears follow'd with a large Crop: Theſe pious and heavenly Showers will make all fruitful. Spiritual Mourning always ends in ſpiritual Mirth. After the humble Penitent hath confeſs'd his Sins, and bewail'd his wicked Life, Mercy is near at Hand; Pardon and Remiſſion of Sin are graciouſly conferr'd upon him, the holy Comforter diſpels his Griefs, and inſpires him with Joy and Gladneſs. Thus Mourning is the Parent of Rejoicing. The *Criticiſm* hath no great Weight in it, that the * ſame Word in the *Hebrew* Tongue ſignifies to *Mourn* and *Repent*, and likewiſe *to Comfort*: But it may hint this to us, which is weighty and ſolid, that Conſolation is the genuine Product of chriſtian Sorrow, and that even in this Life.

* Nicham.

BUT ſecondly, and more eſpecially, in *the Life to come*. Sorrow may endure for a Night, the dark Night of this World, but Joy cometh in the Morning, the Morning of the Reſurrection. Then all Tears ſhall be wiped away from the Eyes of good Men, and Gladneſs and Exultation ſhall ſucceed in their Room. Should I undertake to deſcribe unto you the Joys and Solaces of the heavenly State, you might juſtly think that they are not ſo great and tranſcendent as really they are. The Comforts of that future State in Glory cannot be brought level to our ſhallow Conceptions and Underſtandings: But let us admire what we cannot comprehend. Inſtead of attempting to decipher it, I will proceed to the practical *Application* of all that hath been deliver'd.

Firſt, I INFER from the Premiſes that That muſt needs be a very groſs Miſtake, and as dangerous a one too, that there is no *Happineſs* but in ſenſual Mirth and Rejoicing, in ſecular Affluence and Abundance, and the Delight that proceeds from theſe. We find in the Text that Happineſs is entail'd on ſomething of a a contrary Nature, *Bleſſed are they that Mourn*: And in the parallel Place in *Luke* vi. 20. he thus ſpeaks to his Diſciples, *Bleſſed are ye that Weep now*. But I find no where that Bleſſedneſs is adjoin'd to Laughter and extravagant Mirth. Nay, on the contrary, I read in *Luke* vi. 25. *Wo unto you that Laugh now, for ye ſhall Mourn and Weep*. What think you of that ſad *Memento* to the rich Man ingulph'd in the infernal Pit? *Son, remember that thou in thy Life-time receivedſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil Things: But now he is comforted and thou art tormented*, Luke xvi. 25. Here is the Text punctually accompliſh'd, as alſo the Reverſe of it: The poor Man that *Mourn'd* is now *Comforted*: And the rich Man, who rejoic'd, is now in a mournful State. Be not deceived then by the general Vogue and Cry of the World: Let not their fond Miſtakes influence upon you, but rather liſten to the Words of the royal Preacher in *Eccleſ.* vii. 2, 3. (which are a Deſcant on my Text, and ſpeak the very Purpoſe of this firſt Inference which I have made from it) *It is better*, ſaith he, *to go to the Houſe of Mourning than to go to the Houſe of Feaſting. Sorrow is better than Laughter, for by the Sadneſs of the Countenance the Heart* (and the Life too) *is made better*.

Secondly, THEN be perſuaded to the ſerious Practice of this Duty. *Be afflicted, Mourn and Weep: Let your Laughter be turn'd into Mourning, and your Joy into Heavineſs*, as St. *James* adviſes, *Jam.* iv. 9, 10. Be ſorrowful for your *own Sins* firſt, Sins againſt the clear Diſcoveries of the evangelical Grace and Salvation. Let a profound Grief ſeize your Minds, becauſe you have taken up the Title of Chriſtians, and own'd the Principles of ſo holy a Doctrine and Inſtitution, and yet have not walk'd anſwerably to them. It was rightly ſaid by a godly Biſhop * *Chriſtians* are ſo much the worſe, becauſe they ought to be better than others. This makes you inexcuſable, and leaves you without any Plea for yourſelves. Wherefore let this enhanſe your Sorrow, that you have tranſgreſſed the Laws of Chriſt Jeſus, that you have ſinn'd againſt that Light which is graciouſly indulg'd to you, but denied to many others.

AND when you have lamented your own Miſcarriages, then urge it on yourſelves as neceſſary to lay to Heart the Tranſgreſſions of *the Community*. There is abundant Matter of Grief and Sorrow ſuggeſted to us, by reaſon of the many ſinful Objects which we daily converſe with. We may *See* and *Lament* together; whilſt we fill our Eyes, we cannot but empty them at the ſame time. Whilſt we *Behold*, we muſt needs *Weep*. For whereſoever you look, there is a Catholick Corruption of Manners, an univerſal Diſregard of all that is Holy, Juſt, and Good, an open and profeſs'd Neglect of the moſt neceſſary Duties of Chriſtianity, a manifeſt and viſible Prophanation of God's Name, Worſhip, and Ordinances, a notorious Indulgence to all Pride and Vanity, to Luxury and Debauchery; in a Word, a general Inclination to Infidelity, Irreligion and Atheiſm. We merit the Character which the Holy Ghoſt faſteneth on the Old World, namely, that *All Fleſh hath corrupted his Way*: And therefore we may juſtly expect that God ſhould ſay of us as he did of them, *The End of all Fleſh is come before me*, an univerſal Deſtruction ſhall be the Recompence of their general Defection from me and their Duty. We live in an Age wherein, if *Virtue* now and then ſteps up and begins to peep out in Mens Lives and Manners, ſhe hath Plenty of Enemies to diſgrace and reproach her, to beat her back again, and to baniſh her from all Society. And where ſhe doth prevail, ſhe is in an imperfect Condition, and is attended with many Weakneſſes and Frailties. But *Vice* generally gets the better every where, and reigns in Mens Lives, and gains a full Empire over them. There is a general Apoſtacy from the Truth and from the Ways of Holineſs: And Sin abounds in all Quarters. This ſhould invite us to a ſolemn Lamentation. Rivers of Waters may deſervedly run down our Eyes, as well as Holy *David*'s, becauſe Men keep not God's Laws. The Wickedneſs of the Times we live in is the juſt Subject of our religious Grief and Sorrow.

Thirdly, IF they be *Bleſſed that Mourn*, then we may pronounce ourſelves an unhappy People. For who among us imitates the Examples of *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, *Daniel* and other good Men who deeply lamented the *Calamities* which befel the Publick? The Generality of Men are looſe and frolickſome; you ſeldom obſerve a Tear dropping from their Eyes, unleſs it be extorted by exceſſive Laughter, as it will be ſometimes. But where do we ſee *Sin* (which ought to be the chief Incentive of our Mourning) bewail'd and lamented? Where are the Men that, with St. *Paul*, complain more of their Corruptions than of their outward Afflictions and Diſtreſſes? Where do we find thoſe Perſons who are affected with great Sorrow for their own Sins and the Sins of others. There are few of theſe Mourners in our Nation, as there were in *Iſaiah*'s time, Iſai. xxii. 12, 13. *In that Day*, ſaith he, *did the Lord of Hoſts call to Weeping and to Mourning, and to Baldneſs and to girding with Sack-cloth* (*i. e.* the viſible Tokens of Sorrow) *and behold Joy and Gladneſs, ſlaying Oxen and killing Sheep, eating Fleſh and drinking Wine: Let us eat and drink, for to Morrow we die.* This was the Behaviour of that People: God commanded and call'd for Mourning and ſad Thoughts, but they (to contradict the divine Command) call'd for full Bowls and loaded Tables: And the very Thoughts of dying made them diſorder'd and wild. They uſed this ſtrange Logick, to Morrow or in a ſhort Time we ſhall leave the World, therefore let us be mad in it to Day, and as long as we ſhall live. But hear the fatal Doom which was caus'd by this extravagant Language and Behaviour, *ver.* 14. *Surely this Iniquity ſhall not be purged from you till ye die, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.* They talk'd of *dying*, and *die* they ſhall; they ſhall eternally periſh for this their unſeaſonable and prophane Merriment. On this Conſideration *we* of this Nation may think our Caſe is very dangerous, becauſe the greateſt Numbers of Men among us indulge themſelves in vicious Mirth, when penſive and mournful Thoughts are required of them. But

* Chriſtiani hoc ipſo deteriores quò meliores eſſe deberent. *Salvian.* de Guber. Dei.

Fourthly and laſtly, THE Doctrine of the Text is welcome Tidings to all mournful and penitent Souls. Our Saviour pronounceth them *Bleſſed*, and aſſures us that *Comfort* is entail'd upon them, *Comfort* in this Life, and *Comfort* in another. Bear it ever on your Minds, and ſolace your Hearts with this, that it is the grand Office of Chriſt to *comfort Mourners*, as appears from that notable Place in *Iſai.* lxi. 1, *&c.* Which our Saviour apply'd to himſelf, as you may ſee in *Luke* iv. 18. It is his Office *to comfort all that Mourn to appoint unto them that Mourn in Sion, and to give unto them Beauty for Aſhes, the Oil of Joy for Mourning, the Garment of Praiſe for the Spirit of Heavineſs.* This is the gracious Employment of the Meſſiah: And every true Mourner ſhall experience the gladſome Effects of it. Be of good chear then, O ye diſconſolate Souls, dry up your Tears, aſſwage your Sighs, ſilence your Groans: Bleſs God that he hath given you Hearts to Mourn for Sin, whilſt others make a Mock of it. Bleſs God that you can Weep for the Abominations that are committed, whilſt ſo many Laugh and Rejoice at them.

O HAPPY Sorrow then, that will prevent the Sorrows of Hell! O Bleſſed Grief that will ſecure us from Weeping and Wailing to all Eternity! O thrice Happy Mourning that will ſave us from the everlaſting Pains of the Damned, and lay the Foundation of eternal Joys hereafter! Go then and Mourn for your own and others Sins, and for all the Diſhonour done to God's Name in the World, that you may partake of the excellent Promiſe made here by our Saviour to ſuch Mourners, *Bleſſed are they for they, ſhall be Comforted.*

THE THIRD

BEATITUDE.

OF

MEEKNESS.

MAT. V. 5.

Bleſſed are the Meek, for they ſhall inherit the Earth.

THE evangelical Grace which our Saviour here commends to his Auditors, whether his Diſciples or the common People, is that noble Endowment of *Meekneſs*. Of which I will firſt give a particular and diſtinct Delineation: Secondly, I will ſhew how *Bleſſedneſs* is entail'd upon it: And Thirdly, I will offer ſuch rational and practical Inferences as this Doctrine will yield us.

Firſt, AS to the particular Delineation and Deſcription of this Grace, we are to know that there are two *Extreams* or *Oppoſites* of it, and they are *Softneſs* or *Stupidity* on the one Hand, and *Wrath* or *Fierceneſs* on the other. In the Middle of thoſe *Meekneſs* hath its Place. Firſt, I ſay, Meekneſs is oppoſed to and is excluſive of all Softneſs or ſenſeleſs Stupidity. For tho' every Chriſtian be oblig'd by the Command and Example of his Great Maſter to be Meek, yet it is not hereby intended that he ſhould be ſilly and ſheepiſh, and utterly inſenſible of Wrongs and Injuries. This is no real Commendation of a *Man*, and therefore cannot be the Property of one that is *Chriſt*'s *Diſciple* He is no dull and phlegmatic Thing, as the Prophane have repreſented him to be. *Julian*, that notorious Apoſtate and Scoffer, laugh'd at the good Primitive Chriſtians as Fools and Sots, becauſe they were gentle and mild, patient and humble, and would ſuffer Injuries without reviling and reſiſting, and expos'd themſelves to Dangers, and even Death itſelf, in Defence of the chriſtian Religion. But let Atheiſts and Buffoons ſay what they pleaſe, Chriſtianity is far from Inſenſibleneſs, and never bids us run wilfully into needleſs Dangers and Hazards, but allows us to uſe all prudent and lawful Means to ſecure ourſelves and keep what we have, and avoid the Enemy. We are permitted to preſerve ourſelves in ſome Caſes by a diſcreet Silence: At other Times we may ſave ourſelves by flying from the Fury of our Perſecutors. And there are other fair and laudable Ways of ſhunning the Evils that are threaten'd us, and of evading the Plots and Contrivances of our miſchievous Adverſaries. By no means therefore doth this chriſtian Meekneſs betray us to Eolly and Stupidity.

Secondly, THIS admirable Virtue is oppos'd, and that *chiefly*, to exceſſive *Wrath* and *Rigour*, to inordinate and imprudent Paſſion, and all the Exorbitances of an angry Temper. * *The meek Nature*, ſaith the great Philoſopher, *is directly contrary to that which is wrathful*. And his great Scholar defines it to be † *The appeaſing and quieting of Anger*. I intend now to treat of this Grace as it ſtands in Oppoſition to *this Extream*: I ſhall conſider it as it is that Virtue which moderates and governs the iraſcible Temper. We may look upon it either as it is an *inward Affection* or Habit, as it is ſomething within us which reſiſts the the Emotions of Wrath, and renders our Diſpoſition mild and moderate: Or we may look upon it as it paſſes into *outward Acts*, and hath Influence on our Lives and Manners. I ſhall handle it under both theſe Conſiderations together. And here I may lay down this in general, that *Anger* (to which *Meekneſs* is oppoſed) is not in itſelf unlawful, but it becomes ſo by ſome unlawful Circumſtances which adhere to it. This is clear from the Apoſtle's Words, *Be angry, but ſin not*, Eph. iv. 26. where there is firſt a *Conceſſion*, namely, that there is a juſt and lawful Anger, and that even in thoſe Perſons who are renew'd and ſanctified there is Place for this Anger. For Anger is a Paſſion, which, as all others, we may uſe well or ill. God hath put no Affection in the Soul but may be lawfully exercis'd. There is excellent Uſe of Anger ſometimes. But ſecondly, here is alſo a *Prohibition*, we muſt not be angry ſo as to ſin. As there is a lawful Anger, ſo there is an unlawful one, and this is ever to be eſchew'd. Now the grand Enquiry is, what is this lawful Anger which chriſtian Meekneſs permits and allows of, and what is that unlawful Anger which it forbids and condemns. To give you full Satisfaction, as to this, I anſwer, 1. That Meekneſs fixes the *Object* or *Cauſe* of Anger. 2. It preſcribes the *Meaſures* and *Degrees* of it: And thence we may certainly know what Anger is lawful, and what is unlawful.

* Εναντία θυμοειδεῖ πραεῖα φύσις Plat.
† Καλάϛασις ϗ ἠρέμεσις. ὀργῆς. Ariſtot.

Firſt, I SAY, it is the Grace of Meekneſs that fixes the right Object, and determines the lawful Cauſe and Occaſion of Anger. For our Saviour hath told us what is ſinful Anger in *Mat*. v. 22. namely, *being angry without a Cauſe*, when a Man indulges his haſty Temper without any juſt Cauſe or Occaſion. So that in general we may conclude, that all *cauſeleſs Anger* is forbidden; and on the contrary, that Anger which hath a lawful Object or Cauſe is not forbidden. Now then here again it will be ask'd, what is this *lawful Object* or *juſt Cauſe?* And alſo, what is the *unlawful Cauſe* or *Object* of Anger? Hereby we ſhall diſcover the particular Nature of *Meekneſs*, and ſee how it regulates us, as to the right Object of this Paſſion: And that 1. Negatively. 2. Poſitively.

BY Way of *Negation*, Meekneſs will by no means ſuffer us to be angry *at God*. For there can be no Cauſe imaginable for this, becauſe He *can* do us no Wrong, and we have the greateſt Reaſon in the World to believe that he *will* not. Wherefore it muſt be own'd that *Cain* groſly tranſgreſs'd, when he was angry not only with his Brother, but with God himſelf. *The Lord had Reſpect unto Abel and unto his Offering, but unto Cain and to his Offering, he had not Reſpect: And* therefore *Cain was very wroth*, Gen. iv. 4, 5. Upon another Account the Prophet *Jonas* was angry with God as appears from *Jon*. iii. laſt Verſe, and and the firſt Verſe of the next Chapter, *God repented of the Evil which he had ſaid he wou'd do unto the Ninevites, and he did it not: But it diſpleas'd Jonah exceedingly*

ceedingly; and he was very angry. And afterwards, when *God ſaid to him, doſt thou well to be angry? He anſwer'd, I do well to be angry even unto Death, v. 9.* It is not to be doubted that this was a ſinful Anger, a direct Tranſgreſſion againſt the Laws of *Meekneſs*, which allows us not to find Fault with the Actions of our great Sovereign, or, with this pettiſh Prophet, to decline the Task which God hath ſet us, and to diſlike the Work which our great Maſter hath employ'd us about. It is the inſeparable Property of Meekneſs to ſubmit quietly unto God, and to be content with his Dealings with us. Eſpecially this Virtue manifeſts itſelf in Sufferings, and forbids us to repine and murmur at any adverſe Condition we are brought into, at any Afflictions and Calamities that divine Providence exerciſes us with.

Again, As Meekneſs ſuffers us not to be angry with *God*, ſo neither doth it allow us to be angry with *Men*. For, as for *leſſer Offences* and *Treſpaſſes* againſt ourſelves, they deſerve not Anger. This ſeems to be meant by the Word εἰκῆ in *Mat.* v. 22. which we render *without a Cauſe*, that is, we ſhould not be angry with our Brother for *a light Cauſe*, or on a *ſmall* and *ſlight Occaſion*, for ſo that *Greek* Word frequently ſignifies. There are ſome mean and trivial Occurrences which no meek Man dares ſpend his Anger upon, tho' ſome Damage and Loſs accrue to him by them. Theſe things are too low to diſturb his Mind with, and he, that gives Way to Anger here, ſuffers himſelf always to be at the Command of his Paſſion, and never to take any Reſt, which is a very miſerable and deplorable Condition. The truly meek Man hath learn'd to bear with the Infirmities of his Brethren, and to make the beſt and faireſt Conſtruction of them. He charitably interprets the Actions of thoſe who are unawares ſurpriz'd and overtaken, before they have Time to recollect themſelves, and to prepare againſt the Aſſault. He overlooks Frailties and Incogitances, he paſſes by leſſer Miſpriſions and Imprudences. And as for *great* and *voluntary Treſpaſſes*, and ſuch as were committed with full Conſent of Will, theſe likewiſe are no Matter of his Anger, ſo far as they are conſider'd as Offences *againſt him*, and as Injuries done *to himſelf*: For by the Laws of Chriſtianity he is either obliged to forgive them and paſs them by, according to the Tenour of the Apoſtle's Exhortation *Col.* iii. 12, 13. Where *Meekneſs* is join'd with *Long-ſuffering* and *forbearing one another, and forgiving, one another* as Acts of the ſame Nature and Quality; or elſe he is obliged to bring the Actors of them to that Puniſhment which the Magiſtrate appointed by God is to inflict upon them: But in neither of theſe is he to be angry and wrathful. Yet, as thoſe Offences and Treſpaſſes are Sins *againſt God*, they call for our juſt Anger and Indignation.

WHICH brings me to the next Particular: For as we have ſeen what *is not the Object* of our Anger, ſo now *poſitively* I aſſert that the *direct Object* and *Cauſe* of our Anger is *wilful Sinning againſt God.* We muſt always be moved, when we ſee him diſhonour'd by Vice and Wickedneſs. When we reflect on our *own* evil Doings, theſe ſhould ſtir up a juſt Anger in our Breaſts. We muſt be deeply diſpleas'd and incens'd againſt ourſelves for our frequent violating God's Laws, for our vicious and ungodly Behaviour in the World. This is a lawful, yea, a neceſſary Anger. And ſo is that which is ſhew'd againſt *others* for their offending God and diſhonouring Religion. Old *Eli* is blamed, becauſe he did not check his lewd Sons with ſome Anger and Concern. It was a great Sin in *David* that *he had not diſpleas'd his Son Adonijah at any Time, in ſaying, Why haſt thou done ſo?* 1 Kings i. 6. But at other Times this holy Man was not ſo tame: For his whole Book of Pſalms ſufficiently teſtifies, how he was moved in his Spirit againſt all evil Doers. *Moſes* went out from *Pharaoh in great Anger, Exod.* xi. 8. We read afterwards that *his Anger waxed hot* againſt the *Iſraelites* for their groſs Idolatry, inſomuch that in his Heat he broke both the Tables of the Law, *Exod.* xxxii. 10. And this was an Act of *the meekeſt Man on Earth*, as he is character'd in *Numb.* xii. 3. His holy *Anger* againſt Sin, and his unparallel'd *Meekneſs* were very well conſiſtent. *Phineas* ſhew'd his pious *Indignation* againſt Sin and Sinners, when he ſtood up and executed Judgment, *Pſal.* cvi. 30. St. *Paul's Spirit was ſtirr'd in him*, when he ſaw the City of *Athens* wholly given to Idolatry, *Acts* xvii. Our Saviour himſelf, when he obſerv'd the wicked Behaviour of the unbelieving *Jews, looked round about upon them with Anger*, Mark. iii. 5. Which may confirm us in this Truth, that That is a lawful Anger which is occaſion'd by the Sins which we ſee committed againſt God. And indeed true *Meekneſs* allows us to be angry on no other Occaſion. Nothing is worth our Paſſion but what is immoral, and ſome Way or other offenſive to our Maker. Here we have free Leave and Liberty to vent our Choler, namely, when we ſee the divine Majeſty affronted by profligate Sinners, his Laws and Precepts wilfully trampled under Foot, the worſt of Actions countenanc'd and encouraged, Goodneſs and good Men reviled, abuſed and injured. In this Caſe it is no Breach of *Meekneſs* to give Way to Anger, but in all others it is.

Secondly, As Meekneſs fixes the *Object* or *Occaſion* of Anger, ſo it preſcribes the *Degrees* and *Meaſures* of it. And it is very neceſſary to inſiſt on this, becauſe Anger even on a lawful Occaſion, even in the Cauſe of God, is ſinful if it be immoderate and exceſſive. Therefore it is the Work of *Meekneſs* to ſet Bounds and Limits to this Paſſion, and not to ſuffer it to be exorbitant. As

1. It ſo moderates it, that we ſhall not thereby be unfitted for the Duties of Religion. We may conclude that our Anger is ſinful, if it hinders us in the Service of God, if we cannot composedly and ſeriouſly employ ourſelves in the Exerciſes of Devotion. Then it is apparent that our Anger hath flown out beyond its due Meaſures: And it is the Buſineſs of chriſtian Meekneſs to retrench it, and bring it into right Order again.

2. It ſo regulates it, that it ſuffers it not to break forth into *unfitting Words and Speeches*. Who knows not that theſe are the uſual Attendants of bitter Wrath? Who ſees not that Railing and Reviling are become the proper Dialect of angry Men, and even in Matters of Religion? Now 'tis the Office of Meekneſs to tutour our Tongues, even when we are ſhewing our Anger againſt Sin, leſt otherwiſe we be guilty of that which *Job* blames his Friends for, *Speaking wickedly for God*, Job. xiii. 7. The Speech of a meek Man ſavours of a quiet and ſedate Spirit. He is careful that none be exaſperated and provoked by it. He is obſervant of St. *Peter's* Advice, *Not to render Railing for Railing, but contrariwiſe, Bleſſing: Knowing that he is thereunto call'd, that he ſhould inherit a Bleſſing*. 1 Pet. iii. 9. Which latter Clauſe is the ſame with the Promiſe made in the Text; for *inheriting a Bleſſing* is of the ſame Import with *inheriting the Earth*, as I ſhall ſhew afterwards, and is the Portion of all thoſe meek Souls who bleſs inſtead of Railing. Mark the Apoſtle's *Memento Tit.* iii. 2. *Put them in Mind that they ſpeak Evil of no Man, that they be no Brawlers, but gentle, ſhewing all Meekneſs unto all Men.* Whence it is plain that we can't exerciſe the Grace of Meekneſs unleſs we lay a Reſtraint on our Tongues, and regulate our Speech. Accordingly we find that angry Words are forbid by our Saviour, *Mat.* v. 22. We *muſt not ſay to our Brother*, *Raca*, or *Fool*, that is, we muſt not ſhew our Wrath againſt him by any opprobrious Terms, by any reproachful Language, by Words of Contempt and Diſgrace.

3. Meekness ſo tempers and moderates our Anger, that it will not allow it to be *harmful* and *miſchievous* in the leaſt. Anger is revengeful, and therefore is rightly defined by the Philoſopher to be *a * ſtrong Deſire, mix'd with Grief, to puniſh thoſe that do us any Injury.* It is ſaid to be with *Grief* or *Trouble*, becauſe the angry Man is uneaſy 'till he be reveng'd on the Perſon that hath done him an Injury. Yea, he, that is addicted to this Paſſion, endeavours to increaſe and cheriſh it, that he may be effectually ſtirr'd up to take Revenge. He is like the Lion, that (they ſay) beats himſelf with his own Tail, to make himſelf more fierce and angry. But the meek Man, when he perceives any Commotions of Anger ariſing, endeavours to allay and ſtifle them; he ſtops their Fury before they turn into Hatred and Malice, and proceed to Purpoſes of Revenge. Thus *Meekneſs* preſcribes due Meaſures to this Paſſion, and will not let it fly out ſo far as to be hurtful and injurious.

* ὄρεξις μετὰ λύπης τιμωρίας. Ariſtot.

4thly and laſtly, Meekness ſuffers not Anger to *continue long*, and to be *implacable*. There are thoſe that love to renew the Remembrance of Injuries that were done them, and ſtrive to revive it even when 'tis dying. But the meek Man is ſoon appeas'd, and eaſily reconciled to thoſe that have been injurious to him. He follows St. *Paul's* Counſel, *Eph.* iv. 26. *Let not the Sun go down on your Wrath.* Which is thought by ſome to be a *Hebrew* Phraſe, to ſignify a thing that is not to be long continued, as in *Deut.* xxiv. 15. *At his Day thou ſhalt give him his Hire, neither ſhall the Sun go down upon it*, that is, thou ſhalt pay the hired Servant his Wages quickly, and not put him off from Time to Time. And ſo here the Apoſtle's Meaning is, that we ſhould put a ſpeedy End to our Rage and Choler. It is thought by others that the Apoſtle alludes to the Law of the *Jews*, that a Malefactor ſhould not hang on the Tree *after Sun-ſet*, Deut. xxi. 22. Juſtice being ſatisfied, Vengeance was to ceaſe: The publick Anger was to ſet with the Sun: It ſhould be much more ſo with the private Anger of Men. Others will have the Apoſtle's Words to refer to a Cuſtom among the old *Romans*, which depended on a * Law of the *twelve Tables* relating to Judicatures, namely, that they might ſit in Judgment till the Sun went down, and no longer: After Sun-ſet there were to be no Trials. But I ſhould rather think that the Apoſtle's Words have Relation to the antient Practice (mention'd by † *Plutarch* and other good Authors) of the *Pythagoreans*, who, if they fell out among themſelves, conſtantly were reconciled and made Friends again before the Sun ſet: And had a Place where they met for that Purpoſe, before the Sun went down. It is not improbable that St. *Paul*, who was well skill'd in the Uſages of the *Gentiles*, eſpecially of the *Grecians*, and mentions them frequently in his Writings, alluded to this laudable Cuſtom of *Pythagoras*'s Diſciples, and would have the *Epheſians* (to whom this Practice was not unknown) imitate it in the higheſt Senſe, that is, ſpeedily quench the Flames of Wrath, and not lie down with their Breaſts enraged with Choler. Sleep not with angry Thoughts, leſt you never wake again to repent of them. And thus I have (in Proſecution of the firſt Thing I undertook, namely, to diſcover the true Nature of *Meekneſs*, as it is oppoſed to Anger) ſhew'd how this Grace directs us to the *right Object* of Anger, and ſets the *true Meaſures* of it.

TO diſplay yet further the Nature of this chriſtian Virtue, I will ſum up in brief the *chief Effects* of it in the Life of Man. A meek Perſon may be known by his Deportment and Carriage towards thoſe he converſes with. He is modeſt and humble, and obſervant of his Betters, and obedient to the lawful Commands of his Superiors. For he knows that God hath placed him in this World under Laws and Rules, and it becomes him not to be ſtubborn and refractory, but there is an abſolute Neceſſity of being *ſubject to Principalities and Powers, and obeying Magiſtrates*. He behaves himſelf decently towards all his Inferiors tho' of never ſo mean a Rank: He hates to be rigid and ſevere, and to uſe the utmoſt of his Power: He condeſcends to the weakeſt, and is facile to all. This excellent Temper enables him to reprove others mildly and amicably, ſo that they may plainly ſee he deſigns their real Good and Welfare. He inſults not over the Offender, but lovingly tenders his Admonitions to him, and, even whilſt he rebukes him, lets him underſtand that he bears a Kindneſs to him. And as this chriſtian Grace inſtructs him how to reprove others, ſo it teaches him to take Reproof himſelf, and that with Patience and Thankfulneſs. He holds himſelf unſpeakably engaged to thoſe that remind him of his Faults, and admoniſh him of his Duty. He preſently, upon a Sight of his Errors and Failings, ingenuouſly and frankly confeſſes his Guilt, and asks Forgiveneſs of God firſt, and then of his Brethren whom he tranſgreſs'd againſt: And if the Caſe requires it, he is ready to make Satisfaction. This Grace is an Enemy to Pride and Arrogance, to Turbulency and Contention, to Singularity and Affectation, to Peeviſhneſs and Moroſity, to uncharitable Cenſuring, and whatever elſe is the Product of a bitter and cholerick Spirit, and is deſtructive of Peace and Amity. It inſpires Mens Breaſts with Love and Friendſhip, and abhors a Spirit of Defiance and Contradiction. It teaches us to forget and forgive all Wrongs and Injuries, to render Good for Evil, and to return Courteſies for Affronts and Contumelies. To conclude the Character of evangelical Meekneſs, it diſpoſes the *Hearts* of Men to Gentleneſs, it waſhes away all Gall and Wormwood from their *Tongues*, and it actuates their whole *Lives* with a generous and pleaſing Behaviour. Theſe are the lovely Fruits, this is the happy Off-ſpring of chriſtian Meekneſs.

I PROCEED now to the next thing obſervable in the Text, and that it the *Bleſſedneſs* which is entail'd on Meekneſs. And that is, firſt, generally intimated to us in the Word [*Bleſſed*,] and, ſecondly, more particularly expreſſed in the Words that follow [*They ſhall inherit the Earth.*] As to the more large and

* Sol occaſus ſuprema tempeſts eſto.

* περὶ φιλαδελφ.

and general *Felicity* which attends Meekneſs, it may be compriſed under theſe following Heads,

1. IT fits us for all other Graces: It renders us manageable by good Counſel, and by our own Reaſon and Underſtanding. It makes us willing and tractable, ready to follow the Conduct of the Word of God and of the Holy Spirit. *The Meek will he guide in Judgment, the Meek will he teach his Way*, Pſal. xxv. 9.

2. IT is an Argument of an excellent Spirit, and of very high Improvements in Virtue. It is manly to deſpiſe and paſs by Affronts, to forgive Offences, and to be ſoon reconciled. Meekneſs proceeds from Braveneſs and Generoſity of Mind: For great and noble Spirits take all things well. It is the Flint, not the Pearl, that ſends forth Sparks of Fire. *Solomon* reckons it as a high Atchievement for a Man to vanquiſh himſelf by ſuppreſſing his Wrath: *He that is ſlow to Anger is better than he that is mighty, and he that ruleth his Spirit than he that taketh a City.* Prov. xvi. 32. Which latter Clauſe is as 'twere the *Engliſh* of the Poet's *Latin.*

Fortior eſt qui ſe quam qui fortiſſima vincit
Mœnia ——

That is the nobleſt Conqueſt to get the better of our ſelves, to ſuppreſs the extravagant Sallies of our Paſſion. This is an infallible Proof of a great Spirit. Whereas on the contrary * Anger and Deſire of Revenge argue Weakneſs of Mind, and a womaniſh Infirmity, and a faint and effeminate Spirit.

* —— quippe minuti
Semper & infirmi eſt animi
exiguique voluptas.
Ultio. ——

3. THIS Virtue is in itſelf moſt pleaſing and delightful, and therefore contributes to our Happineſs. It is in its own Nature calm and quiet, and allays all Storms and Tempeſts in our Breaſts, and extirpates that Fierceneſs of Mind, which is never without its own Torment. I remember the royal Philoſopher *Antonnius* hath this among his Conſiderations againſt Anger, that we ſuffer more grievouſly by the Anger we entertain againſt Things or Perſons, than we do from the Things and Perſons themſelves about which we are concern'd and are ſo angry and troubled. How peaceable and comfortable a thing then muſt Meekneſs be which ſaves us all this Trouble, and hinders the Workings of that exorbitant Paſſion which ſometimes proves mortal to them that cheriſh it?

4. WE do not only find *within us* the Comforts of Meekneſs, but it is alſo amiable and beautiful in the Eyes of all Men. It gains Love, and finds Friends where-ever it comes, it conciliates a wonderful Reſpect and Reverence from every one. And thence it is that by this holy Art we are ſometimes effectually enabled to conquer our moſt enraged Enemies, and to vanquiſh thoſe that have done us the greateſt Injuries. We † *heap Coals of Fire on their Heads*, and melt them into a friendly Compliance with us. By Meekneſs we not only overcome ourſelves (as was ſaid before) but we ſubdue the Malice of our Adverſaries. Gentleneſs charms down the evil Spirit of Hatred and Revenge. This oftentimes is the happy Effect of this excellent Temper. However, it is graceful and comely in the Judgment of all underſtanding Perſons. And therefore St. *Peter* deſervedly calls it the *Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit*, which, ſaith he, *is in the Sight of God of great Price*, 1 Pet. iii. 4.

* Prov. xxv. 22. Rom. xii. 20.

5. THIS reminds me of another Part of that *Bleſſedneſs* which accompanies it, and that is the high Eſteem which God himſelf hath of it. It gains not only the good Will and Favour of Men, but is loved of God, and makes us and our Services acceptable to him. Which is moſt evident from what our Saviour hath deliver'd in *Mat.* v. 24. *Leave thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy Way: Firſt be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift*, and thy Gift ſhall be accepted. Sacrifice thy Spleen and ill Will, and then appear before God with thy Offerings, and he will have Regard both to thee and them. St. *James* aſſures us that the *Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteouſneſs of God*, Jam. i. 20. that is, that Righteouſneſs which is acceptable to him. But the baniſhing of Wrath, ill Will and Rancour, makes our Oblations well-pleaſing

to him, and derives a ſure Bleſſing upon us. Theſe are ſhort Hints of that *Bleſſedneſs* which accompanies this incomparable Grace.

BUT I paſs to the more *particular Happineſs* aſſigned to it, *They ſhall inherit the Earth.* They *ſhall* inherit it, may ſome ſay, but *when* ſhall that be? We find it far otherwiſe in the World, for *meek* Souls are not uſually the Lords of many Acres of Ground. Every Body robs them of what they have. There are furious *Nimrods* who will be hunting after their Poſſeſſions. The *Meek* ones generally are their Prey. They, of all Men, are moſt liable to Cruelty and Violence. Shall the *Meek inherit the Earth? Moſes* is ſaid to be the meekeſt Man on it, and yet he was denied the Favour of entring the Land of *Canaan.* God removed *Abraham* into that Land, but 'tis expreſly ſaid *he gave him no Inheritance in it, no not ſo much as to ſet his Feet on,* Acts vii. 5. How ſhall we aſſoil theſe things, and make them comport with the Text?

SOME Enthuſiaſtick People have hugg'd themſelves upon Reflection on theſe Words, and fancying *themſelves* to be the *Meek* here ſpoken of, have inferr'd thence that they ought to *inherit the Earth,* to have all the Poſſeſſions and Riches of this World, and in order to that, that all others are to be diſpoſſeſs'd of what they enjoy, and to be deprived of their Eſtates and Revenues But this will not gain Aſſent with Perſons of any moderate Sobriety. The Opinion of the Saints reigning a thouſand Years perſonally with Chriſt upon Earth will not, I ſuppoſe, be admitted as an Anſwer to that Difficulty, becauſe it is not generally receiv'd: But yet if we ununderſtand the Doctrine of the *Millennium* aright, I do not ſee but it may be included in this Beatitude: For then in the literal and ſtrict Senſe *the Meek ſhall inherit the Earth.*

BUT there is a fuller and more capacious Meaning to be aſſign'd of theſe Words. I conceive that the Senſe of them is to be fetch'd from that Promiſe *Pſal.* xxxvii. 11. *The Meek ſhall inherit the Earth, and ſhall delight themſelves in the abundance of Peace.* Which is the ſame Promiſe, as I apprehend, with this in the Text: And it is not to be doubted that this was borrow'd from that: Wherefore it concerns us to look into the Meaning of thoſe Words there. It is very plain from the Antitheſis in that *Pſalm* between the *Godly* and the *Ungodly,* that the Pſalmiſt means no other than this, that the former ſhall fare well, and be preſerv'd in Safety and be abundantly rewarded; but the latter ſhall in due time be remarkably puniſh'd: Curſes and Judgments ſhall be the juſt Recompenſe of their Wickedneſs, *Evil-doers ſhall be cut off, but thoſe that wait upon the Lord ſhall inherit the Earth,* as you read in the 9th. *ver.* of this *Pſalm.* And again in *ver.* 22. *Such as be bleſſed of him ſhall inherit the Earth, and they that be curſed of him ſhall be cut off.* So that there is in this Promiſe of *inheriting the Earth* a Synecdochical Way of ſpeaking: The inheriting of the Earth alludes to the *poſſeſſing of the Land of Promiſe,* which the *Iſraelites* look'd upon as ſo ſignal a Bleſſing, and is mention'd here to expreſs *all other temporal Benefits and Bleſſings.* Theſe are ſhadow'd out by the Poſſeſſion of the Land of *Canaan,* which thoſe only who were *meek* arrived to, the froward and murmuring *Iſraelites* being all deſtroy'd in the Wilderneſs. And more particularly the Promiſe refers to the diſtributing the Land of *Canaan* by *Lot* to the *Iſraelites* for their *Inheritance:* And thence the Word κληρονομεῖν is uſed in the Text, it properly denoting an *inheriting by Lot.*

BUT ſeeing *the Earth is the Lord's, and the Fulneſs thereof,* this Promiſe is to be underſtood in a larger and more comprehenſive Senſe, and is entail'd on righteous and godly Men in *whatſoever Land* they inhabit, in whatſoever Country or Coaſt they dwell, and *the inheriting the Earth* (often mention'd by the Pſalmiſt, and here by our Saviour) ſignifies their enjoying thoſe temporal good Things, which God beſtows upon them for their well being in this World. I will briefly explain this in the following Particulars,

1. THE meek ſhall inherit the Earth and the good Things of it, that is, all meek and holy Perſons have a *Right* and *Claim* unto them, as an *Heir* hath to the Eſtate. Wicked Men hold what they have by *Leave* and *Diſpenſation* only, and not by Inheritance: But the Heirs of the Promiſe in Chriſt Jeſus do properly *inherit,* they hold what they have by an Hereditary Right. Tho' the Inheritance be kept from the Heir, yet it his undoubted Right. *Abraham* is ſtiled * the *Heir of the World,* tho' he had not one Foot of Earth in the promiſed Land. But the ungodly, tho' never ſo great Poſſeſſors, are but Invaders, they come up-

* κληρονόμος τοῦ κόσμου. Rom. iv. 13.

on other Mens Ground, and an Action of Treſpaſs may juſtly lie againſt them: But it muſt not be brought and tried in human Courts. For the Bible is no Writ of Ejectment, Religion doth not give Men Livery and Seiſin. The Title to the *New Jeruſalem* doth not put the Saints into Poſſeſſion of Cities and Countries here. Yet

2*dly*, MEEKNESS is ſuch a Conveyance, or Tenure rather, whereby many good Men actually hold and poſſeſs the good Things of the Earth. It is certain that this Promiſe in the Text hath been fulfill'd, even in the literal Senſe, to the Servants of God. Their Condition on Earth hath been commodious and comfortable, they have been bleſs'd with the good Things of this Life. Yea, and God hath had Reſpect to their *Meekneſs* in this very Particular. Which was long ſince obſerv'd by the Son of *Sirach*, Eccleſ. x. 14. *The Lord hath caſt down the Throne of proud Princes, and ſet up the Meek in their ſtead.* Thus the meek *David* ſucceeded in *Saul*'s Room. *Belſhazzar* was thruſt down from the *Aſſyrian* Throne, and *Darius* and *Cyrus*, who gave ſignal Proof of their Meekneſs and Condeſcention, were ſet in his Place. And in many more Inſtances this might be made good.

3*dly*, THO' Meekneſs doth not always give actual Poſſeſſion of the Earth, yet it always capacitates for it. For (as hath been ſaid before) this Grace marvellouſly conduces to Favour and Friendſhip. Even in the View of the World, it hath been obſerv'd that a mild and gentle Diſpoſition hath gain'd that which others could never compaſs by Fierceneſs and Force of Arms. Were it not for the ſtrange Depravity of the World, no Perſons imaginable are in ſo fair a Way as the *Meek* to delight themſelves with the Abundance of Peace, as the Pſalmiſt expreſſes it. None have Principles that are ſo conſiſtent with and advancive of Amity and Peace: None can prove ſo advantageous to Societies and Communities. Whereſore theſe Men are in the beſt *Capacity* to poſſeſs the earthly Bleſſings of this World, and to thrive and proſper here. Our Saviour then may be thought to ſpeak here, not of the *certain Event* and *Succeſs* of Meekneſs, but as it is conſider'd abſtractly in its *own Nature and Efficacy*, and as it would always be with it, if the World were wiſe and ſober.

4*thly*, AS Meekneſs gives all thoſe that are endued with it a *Right* unto the good Things of this World, and likewiſe beſtows on many an *actual Poſſeſſion* of them, ſo it never fails to bleſs them with the *Fruition* of them, which is a great deal better than the bare *Poſſeſſion* of them. The worſt and vileſt Men are *Poſſeſſors* of the World, but they can't properly and truly be ſaid to *enjoy* it: But every meek Man doth really poſſeſs ſomething, and enjoy all, yea even that which he doth not poſſeſs, for even the Abſence (I will not ſay the Want) of ſome of the good Things of this Life gives him Occaſion to exerciſe his Contentment, Patience and Self-denial. Thus he *enjoys* what he hath not. And as for thoſe things which he hath, he makes a right Uſe of them, that is, he employs them to the Honour and Glory of the Donor, and to his own and others real Good, by being thankful for them, and making them ſerviceable to the beſt Ends and Purpoſes.

BUT you will ſay, Is *inheriting the Earth*, and having and enjoying the Conveniences of this World, ſo great a *Bleſſedneſs*? Is this all that is couch'd in this Beatitude of our Saviour? No, aſſuredly. There is ſome greater Felicity reſerv'd for the Meek, and conſequently ſome higher Meaning in our Saviour's Words. This Promiſe then is to be taken in a ſpiritual Senſe alſo. The Land of *Canaan* was a Type and Pledge of an eternal Inheritance, and therefore Chriſt doth not unfitly expreſs this Beatitude in the Pſalmiſt's Words, which primarily had Reſpect to the Promiſed Land. The Bleſſedneſs then here mention'd, tho' it ſounds as if it were earthly and temporal only, is expreſſive to us of that endleſs Happineſs which is to be enjoy'd in the other World. I pray do not boggle at it when I tell you, that by *the Earth* here is meant *Heaven*. Thoſe Learned Expoſitors, St. *Jerom* and *Theophylact* intimate as much, but * another Father expreſly ſaith that Chriſt's Words are in the higheſt Meaning to be underſtood of Heaven. Whereſore when we read this Text, our Thoughts muſt not be confined to temporal Things, but we muſt know that the Felicity contain'd in this Promiſe is greater and higher than any thing here below. As the *Land of Canaan* prefigured an eternal Inheritance, ſo here Heaven and

endleſs

* *Greg. Nyſſ.* Orat. 2. de Beatitud.

endleſs Happineſs hereafter are denoted by this Expreſſion of *inheriting the Earth*. The Manſions of Glory are inhabited only by the Meek: The Wrathful and Revengeful are excluded thence.

I PROCEED now to the laſt Part of my Undertaking, which is to preſent you with ſuch uſeful and pious *Inferences* as the premis'd Doctrine will afford us.

Firſt, SEE here and admire the Excellency of the chriſtian Religion. Behold what great Privileges are annex'd to it! *It hath the Promiſe of this Life*, as well as *of that which is to come*. Our Saviour hath undertaken, in this Text, to promote and ſecure your temporal Concerns. If you be *meek*, *you ſhall inherit the Earth*, you ſhall not be denied the Bleſſings of this Life. This may ſtrike dumb the prophane Herd of Men in the World, who defame Religion as an uſeleſs and unprofitable Thing: They would perſuade you, that it makes Men poor and beggarly, and hath no outward Emolument adjoined to it. This is falſe and groundleſs, and our Saviour's Words are a ſufficient Confutation of it. He lets us know, that Meekneſs is no Ways prejudicial to our worldly Advantage, but very much conduces to it. Be raviſh'd then with the tranſcendent Excellency of Chriſtianity, which makes ſuch ample Proviſion for us, in reſpect of earthly Things; and withal founds it in that which makes it *really better*. Which is the next Thing I am to remind you of.

Secondly, SEE here (as the outward Privileges, ſo) the *intrinſick Worth* of Meekneſs. Great Heirs may come to inherit their Eſtates, but theſe do not add a real and inward Worth to them: But behold here an Inheritance, which is a true Ornament, and a ſubſtantial Accompliſhment; and renders thoſe, that have it, truly valuable. Meekneſs is that admirable Endowment, which allays the exceſſive Boiling and Eſtuation of our Blood, and makes our Pulſe beat evenly and ſoftly. It tames our wild and barbarous Nature, and quells our brutiſh and ſavage Inclinations, and cools the Heat and Calenture of that raging Paſſion which is wont to blind our Reaſon, and put out the Eyes of our Underſtanding. Who will not? Who cannot ſpeak well of that chriſtian Grace, which diſpoſes us for all other Graces? Who can chooſe but love that incomparable Virtue, which makes us be loved of all Men, which reconciles us to our greateſt Enemies, and to ourſelves? If this evangelical Excellency did prevail in the Minds of Men, the World would be ſtrangely huſh'd and quiet; you would not have your Ears fill'd with needleſs Quarrels and Controverſies, you would not be alarm'd and affrighted with the furious Shocks of diſputing and wrangling Men. If this gentle Virtue was diffuſed through the Hearts of Chriſtians; you ſhould not hear them make ſuch a Noiſe, about indifferent Matters; you ſhould ſee all opprobious Names and Terms of a diſtinguiſhing Odium laid aſide; and Men would embrace one another, not becauſe they are of the ſame Party, but becauſe they are all Brethren in common, and all Chriſtians, by a more obliging Law. Were the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit in Faſhion, (as certainly it is the moſt becoming Bravery of a Chriſtian) Pride, and Self-conceit, uncharitable Animoſities and Diſſentions, Strife and Envy, would be caſt off, as Things utterly diſgraceful and diſhonourable. Didſt thou ſway thy Scepter in our Hearts, and impartially reign in our Lives, all Malice and Revenge would be ſoon dethroned, and good Will, and hearty Kindneſs, would take Place every where. O thou noble and tranſcendent Grace! wert thou freely entertained among us? were thy Rules obſerved by us? No Noiſe of Wars ſhould moleſt us, no bloody Weapons ſhould be ſnatch'd up, to work more effectually one another's Miſchief. O thou peaceable and lovely Grace! Hadſt thou full Poſſeſſion and Command of Mens Souls? Didſt thou go thy Circuit through the World? univerſal Peace and Juſtice would take Place, without the Aſſiſtance of formal Judicatures, or any litigious Arts. Were thy excellent *Chancery* erected in Mens Breaſts, all Quarrels muſt ceaſe, and there wou'd be no other Strife than that of excelling in Charity and good Will.

I MIGHT ſhew likewiſe, (not only the outward Advantages, and inward Worth, but) the indiſpenſable *Neceſſity* of this Grace. It is fitted to all the Purpoſes of our Lives, it is requiſite in all Conditions and Emergencies, it muſt be ſpread thro' all Undertakings and Enterprizes, or they will fail of their right End. It muſt be a Governor to *Superiors*, to cauſe them to carry it affectionately, ly, towards thoſe that are under them. It muſt have as powerful an Aſcendent over *Inferiors*, to make them behave themſelves orderly and ſubmiſſively, towards thoſe that are ſet over them. It is a neceſſary Requiſite, in the *Miniſters* and *Diſpenſers of the Oracles of God*, that they may kindly influence on thoſe that are committed to their Charge; that they may *draw them with the Cords of a Man*, and mollify the hardeſt, with gentle Reaſon and Entreaties. It is no leſs uſeful in the *Hearers*, that they may profit by the Miniſtry of the Word; for (as St. *James* exhorts them) they muſt *receive with Meekneſs the ingrafted Word, which is able to ſave their Souls*, James i. 21. It is a neceſſary Virtue for *Parents*, that they may *not provoke their Children to Wrath*, as the Apoſtle enjoins; for *Children*, that they may know how to ſubmit themſelves to the Government of their near Relations. For Maſters of Families, that they may conduct thoſe that are under them, with Moderation and Mildneſs; for *Servants*, that they may practiſe Obedience and chriſtian Subjection. It is proper for the *Rich*, that they may not be puffed up with Pride, and deſpiſe their Brethren. It is a neceſſary Qualification for the *Poor*, that they may behave themſelves ſuitably to their Condition. For thoſe of *riper Years*, that they may not be moroſe and froward: For *Youth*, that they may ſhew Reſpect and Reverence to their Elders. For Men of *Study* and *Contemplation*, that they may manage their Notions aright, and *be wiſe to Sobriety*: For Men of *Traffick* and *Buſineſs*, that they may converſe in the World, with honeſt Simplicity. And in brief, for all Men, that they may bring Honour to their Religion and holy Profeſſion. Thus this Grace is of univerſal Influence, it is ſuited to all Degrees of Perſons, to all Employments, Conditions and Relations: Nothing in Religion can commence, nothing can proceed, nothing can end well without it. Thus you ſee I am very deſirous to poſſeſs you with high Apprehenſions and Eſteem of the Excellency and Dignity of this Grace.

Thirdly, THE main Inference, from all that hath been ſaid, is this: Practiſe this excellent and uſeful Virtue. And that you may do ſo, make uſe of theſe following Helps.

I. ENEEAVOUR to frame right Apprehenſions concerning *yourſelves*, and to underſtand the true Nature of the *Things of this World*. Conſider who you are, and where you live, and whom you converſe with, and what is your main Buſineſs and Concern; and then you will ſoon learn to compoſe your Minds, and regulate your Paſſions, and more particularly that of Anger, when you meet with Loſſes and Diſappointments, when you are reproached and vilified, when you are injured and wronged. Remember that you dwell in a Place, where thoſe Things *muſt needs be*; for Men of corrupt Natures, and evil Diſpoſitions, will be doing Miſchief, and they cannot altogether be hinder'd; but you may hide exceſſive Wrath and Diſpleaſure againſt them. You can conſider that this is the Nature and Tendency of the Things of this World, and of the Perſons in it: And it is your Buſineſs to look after another and better World, which if you ſeriouſly mind, you will not be much concerned for thoſe Things. It is one of *Antoninus*'s Conſiderations againſt Anger, * That the Life of Men is very ſhort: And, therefore, we have ſomething elſe to do, than to fret and be angry. We ſhould be continually fitting ourſelves for a future State, and not vexing ourſelves with the preſent one. We muſt not affect Eaſe and Repoſe in this troubleſome World, we muſt not be nice and delicate, for this nouriſhes Anger, and makes Way for it: But if we can deſpiſe the World, and uſe it moderately, we ſhall not be diſturbed and enraged at any thing in it.

AND you muſt be ſure to bear in your Minds, that every Thing, which happens to us, is by God's over-ruling Providence; and this will be an excellent Means to ſtifle all immoderate Paſſion. God bid *Shimei* curſe *David*: That Conſideration made the good King calm and quiet, meek and ſubmiſſive. And he would have the Contemplation of the ſame over-ruling Hand produce the like Effect in others. *Pſal.* xxxvii. 7, 8, 9. *Reſt in the Lord, and wait patiently for him; fret not thy ſelf becauſe of him that proſpereth in his Way, becauſe of the Man who bringeth wicked Devices to paſs. Ceaſe from Anger, and forſake Wrath;* —— *for yet a little while, and the Wicked ſhall not be:* And in the following Verſes, he ſhews the Juſtice of God, towards proſperous Sinners; and lets us know, that he will puniſh them with his own Hand. Wherefore we muſt not preſume to act Revenge, we muſt not invade the Throne of the Almighty, we muſt not meddle with that which he hath reſerved to himſelf. The ſerious Thoughts of this are the ready Way to Meekneſs and Forbearance.

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* ὅτι ἀκαριαῖος ὁ ἀνθρώπειος βίος.

2. USE this Expedient. When Anger ſurprizes you, labour to *divert* it. Thus it was no contemptible Advice given by ſome Moraliſts of old, that Perſons, when they are angry, ſhould diſtinctly repeat the Letters of the Alphabet; and particularly we are told, that *Poſſidonius* advis'd his Pupil, the Emperor *Auguſtus*, to do ſo, whenever he found himſelf ſeized with Anger. This was one Way to ſhake off that furious Paſſion, thereby to employ his Mind about ſomething elſe. But any other lawful Thing, which will be ſerviceable to divert the Paſſion, may be made uſe of by us. We may take up a Reſolution to read, or write, to walk, or run, when we find this boiſterous Gueſt come upon us: Or we may induſtriouſly neglect and diſregard that which gave Occaſion of our Anger; we ſhall do well not to entertain it in our Thoughts, but to thruſt it out, and charge it to trouble us no more. This, it is probable, is the Apoſtle's Meaning, when he bids us *give Place to Wrath*, Rom. xii. 19. Some indeed interpret it of *other Mens Wrath*, as if we were adviſed here to *appeaſe* it by the beſt Means we can. Others underſtand it of *God's Wrath*, becauſe it is ſaid in the next Words, *Vengeance is mine, and I will repay it*, as if the Apoſtle commanded us here to give Way to the Anger and Vengeance of God; that is, to let him alone to execute it, on thoſe that have injured us, it belonging properly to him. But when we are bid to give place to Wrath, *Wrath* being *abſolutely* mentioned, it is moſt congruous to Reaſon, to think that it is not meant of any Wrath but *our own*; and then the plain Meaning of *giving Place to it* is, that we ſhould give Way for it to paſs, that we ſhould take Care to be rid of it; and particularly by diverting it, by applying ourſelves to ſome other Thing, by entertaining ourſelves with other Objects. Phyſicians ſtop the Blood by Revulſion, that is, they ſtanch the Bleeding in one Place, by opening a Vein in another. We ſhould do ſomething like this, change the Object of our Anger, and turn it into another Channel; eſpecially let our Heats and Paſſion be ſpent on our vicious Lives and Manners. This is a good Way to rebate the Edge of our Choler, and at laſt, to extirpate it.

3. That you may be Poſſeſſors of this admirable Grace of chriſtian Meekneſs, lay in a great Stock of *Humility*. Anger is generally founded on Pride. If there were not this Mud at the Bottom, the Veſſel might be ſtirr'd, and that, which is in it, would ſtill remain clear. If Mens Hearts were not defiled with Pride, they would not appear ſo diſturbed and diſcompoſed as they do. They think too highly of themſelves, and of their Worth; and hence they are eaſily enraged, when they perceive that others undervalue them, much more if they reproach and affront them: But Humility enables Men to bear Affronts and Injuries, with a calm and patient Spirit, and to forgive the Offences of their Brethren,

4. *Temperance* is a good Specifick againſt this outrageous Diſtemper, I have been diſcourſing of: For generally it may be obſerved, that Wine is the Fuel of Wrath. Intemperate Drinkings inflame Mens Choler, and violently ſtir up the iraſcible Appetite. Thoſe, that are intoxicated with ſtrong Drinks, are often drunk with Paſſion. Hereupon the *Jews* have this Saying, "He that drinks "much, and yet is not ruffled and diſcompoſed, hath the Wiſdom of the "whole *Sanhedrim*:" Their Meaning is, that it is very hard for a Man to abſtain from Anger, when he is inflamed with Wine. It concerns us therefore to be temperate, if we would not be overcome of unſeemly Anger: Take Notice, that in *Tit*. i. 7. *Not ſoon Angry*, and *not given to Wine*, are joined together by the holy Apoſtle.

5. I ADVISE thoſe, who are wont to be ſubject to Paſſion againſt their Brethren, when they treſpaſs againſt them, to reflect on themſelves, and to take Notice on their own Faults and Infirmities; and then they will feel that unlawful Ferment abated. This was the Expedient recommended by St. *Paul*, *Tit*. iii. 2, 3. *Put them in mind to be gentle, and to ſhew all Meekneſs unto all Men; for we ourſelves alſo were ſometimes fooliſh and diſobedient*. Uſe all Mildneſs and Candour, towards thy offending Brother, becauſe thou haſt offended God and thy Brethren, and thou doſt ſo daily. Or if thou haſt deſcended into thy ſelf, and ſeeſt that thou art not guilty of

the ſame, or as ill Behaviour as thy Brethren; yet conſider this, that thou *may'ſt* be, and thou knoweſt not how ſoon: *Let him that ſtandeth take heed, leſt he fall.* If thou ſhalt meet with the ſame Temptations that befell *them*, thou may'ſt be as ready as they to cloſe with them; and then thou wilt deſire to be gently dealt with, and to have thy Offences forgot. It is thy very Intereſt then to deal compaſſionately with Offenders, becauſe thou may'ſt ſtand in need of the ſame Pity and Compaſſion thy ſelf. There cannot be a more ſeaſonable Exhortation and Caution, than that of the foreſaid Apoſtle, *Gal.* vi. 1. *Brethren, if a Man be overtaken in a Fault, ye which are ſpiritual* (ye-that have attained to the true and genuine Spirit of Chriſtianity) *reſtore ſuch a one in the Spirit of Meekneſs, conſidering thy ſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted.* This is another Specifick, againſt this ſpiritual Malady.

6thly, SET the Example of the moſt high God before your Eyes, and learn thence to be Meek, and to baniſh all immoderate Wrath. How often doth the holy Scripture repreſent him a God, merciful, patient, long-ſuffering, ſlow to Anger, mild and benign towards the Sons of Men? He bears with the worſt of Sinners! He paſſes by the Offences of obſtinate Tranſgreſſors! Why then ſhall not I bear with my offending Brother? why ſhall not I paſs by his Failings and Treſpaſſes againſt me? *God* from Heaven ſhews Gentleneſs and Meekneſs, and ſhall I breathe out Wrath and Fury againſt my fellow Creatures, I who am as guilty as thoſe whom I find Fault with, I who daily offend God, and yet am forgiven by him, I who am ſtrictly commanded by God, to forgive my Brethren, as I expect Forgiveneſs of my Sins from him? In a Word, Why ſhall not I be Meek, who have God himſelf for my Example? and who cannot but acknowledge that I am indiſpenſably bound to imitate that Example?

7. CONSIDER yet further, how meek a *Saviour* and *Redeemer* you have, and then you will be aſhamed to juſtify your Anger and Rage upon any Account. Look unto Jeſus, and make him your Pattern, and the rather becauſe he bids you do ſo, *Learn of me for I am Meek and lowly in Heart*, Matt. xi. 29. Of him were thoſe Words ſpoken by the Prophet, *Tell ye the Daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto the Meek*, &c. Zech. ix. 9. Matt. xxi. 5. When the angry Diſciples call'd for Fire to come down from Heaven, to conſume thoſe Perſons they were diſpleaſed with; obſerve how Chriſt checked them, for their revengeful Wiſhes, mark how he threw Water on their Flames, and cool'd their ſcorching Spirits, *He turned and rebuked them, ſaying, ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of*, Luke ix. 55. As much as if he had ſaid, This is not the right chriſtian Diſpoſition, this doth not become the Followers of ſo meek a Maſter. Diſcover your Religion, by ſome milder Principles, think not to ſhew yourſelves my Diſciples, by your unmortified Paſſions. Was not our Saviour a Pattern of Meekneſs, in the whole Courſe of his Life, eſpecially in the ſuffering Part of it? *When he was reviled, he reviled not again, when he ſuffered, he threatened not*, 1 Pet. ii. 23. Yea, when he hung on the Croſs, he prayed for his Murderers, that they might be forgiven by God. Who would not follow ſuch an Example? Who would not practiſe ſo commendable a Virtue for his Sake? St. *Paul* binds this Duty on the *Coloſſians*, by this very Tie, *Col.* iii. 13. *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any Man have a Quarrel againſt any, even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye.* Obſerve here, that the Apoſtle grounds his Exhortation to Meekneſs, and thoſe great Inſtances of it, *forbearing* and *forgiving one another*, on the Example of Chriſt. Well might the ſame Apoſtle uſe that earneſt and pathetick Adjuration, in 2 *Cor.* x. 1. *I beſeech you by the Meekneſs and Gentleneſs of Chriſt*, a moſt prevailing Motive certainly, if we weigh it aright.

8thly, and *Laſtly*, CONSIDER ſeriouſly, the miſchievous Nature, and direful Effects of Anger. The * *Greek Moraliſt* hath an excellent Treatiſe, wherein he ſhews the Evil of this Paſſion. And the famous *Antoninus* hath ſeveral particular Conſiderations againſt this Vice, the fourth of which ſeems to be the Sum of them all; namely, that † *this is the Source of a Multitude of Sins.* The Exceſs of this Affection muſt needs lead Men to all Manner of Diſorders in their Lives, becauſe it diſturbs the free Operations of the Mind, and darkens the Underſtanding, and dethrones Reaſon, and betrays Men to Sottiſhneſs and Folly. We cannot but obſerve, that this very Thing is often inculcated by the wiſe Man, *Anger reſteth in the Boſom of Fools*, Eccl. vii. 9. *He that is ſoon angry dealeth*

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* Plutar. περὶ ἀοργησίας.

† ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς πολλὰ ἁμαρτάνεις.

dealeth fooliſhly, Prov. xiv. 17. But, on the contrary, *The Diſcretion of a Man deferreth his Anger*, Prov. xix. 11. And again, *He that is ſlow to Anger is of great Underſtanding, but he that is haſty of Spirit exalteth Folly*, Prov. xiv. 29. And in ſeveral other Places, he ſpeaks to the ſame Purpoſe. So that on this Account, the Perſons, who are overcome of Paſſion, are very liable to Error and Vice.

THEIR Underſtandings and Reaſonings being ſo greatly diſordered, 'tis no Wonder that their Lives are blemiſh'd with the groſſeſt Miſcarriages. *Wrath is cruel, and Anger is outragious*, Prov. xxvii. 4. And in *Prov.* xxii. 24. An *angry* and a *furious Man* are Terms equivalent. Where this Fury and Madneſs prevails, nothing is done orderly; the Voice is clamorous, the Looks are affrighting, and the whole Behaviour is rude and boiſterous. Whence we may underſtand the Meaning of that Advice, which a *Heathen* Moraliſt uſed to give Men, for the quelling of Anger; namely, that they would look themſelves in a *Glaſs*, when they were in the Heighth of that Paſſion, that they might ſee in what a diſordered Caſe they are. An angry Man is a very ill Spectacle; or rather, he looks more like a Fury than a Man, when he flings about, ſtorms and bluſters, rants and raves, and doth all Things ridiculouſly, abſurdly, inhumanly. Contemplate, conſider, what Kind of Monſters you are at ſuch a Time, and it may prove a good Remedy againſt this Sin. *Gaſſendus*, in the Life of *Peireskius*, tells us, That that great Philoſopher beholding, by the Help of a Microſcope, two little contemptible Animals (of the ſame Sort that were made of the Duſt of the Land of *Egypt*) puſhing at one another, and, after their Manner, fighting and combating, obſerved ſuch great Commotions and Diſorders within them, through their tranſparent Bodies, that he took Occaſion thence to infer, what greater Agitations and Broils there muſt needs be in the Bodies of *Men*, when they are diſturbed with exceſſive Anger; and hence he remonſtrates againſt that pernicious and deſtructive Paſſion, and declares how healthful and ſafe it is to be free from it. To think of, and duly ponder the *Miſchief* of immoderate Anger, is ſufficient to make us loath it, and even to be angry with ourſelves, that we ever indulged it.

I CONCEIVE that the Miſchief of unlawful Anger is ſuggeſted to us in thoſe Words of the Apoſtle, which refer to this unruly Paſſion, *Eph.* iv. 27. *Neither give Place to the Devil.* I know *Eraſmus* and our *Annotator* read the Words thus, *Neither give Place to the Calumniator*, but I ſee no Reaſon to quit our Tranſlation, and therefore I take the Word διάβολος, as 'tis frequently uſed in the New Teſtament, for the *Devil* or *Satan*, who takes Advantage of us by reaſon of our immoderate Paſſions, but eſpecially he endeavours to make our *extravagant Anger* ſerviceable to his Purpoſes. If then you give Way to this, you cheriſh the Deſigns of that Evil Spirit, yea, you come under the Dominion of that Prince of Darkneſs. By this ſingle Vice he will betray you to a Multitude of Evils, or rather, this one Sin, foſter'd and perſiſted in, contains in it that Multitude. For it being ſo frequently founded on Malice, and ſo often extending as far as Blood and Slaughter, you may eaſily imagine what a complex Vice this is, and conſequently how advantageous to the Devil's Kingdom. This Torrid Zone is Satan's Territory, and will at laſt bring the fierce Inhabitants of it to the flaming Regions of the Damned. I will ſhut up this Particular with that remarkable Paſſage in Mat. v. 21, 22. *Ye have heard that it was ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not kill, and whoſoever ſhall kill, ſhall be in Danger of the Judgment, but I ſay unto you that whoſoever is angry with his Brother without a Cauſe, ſhall be in Danger of the Judgment.* Yea, Chriſt adds that even wrathful Language is liable to *the Council* and to *Hell-fire*. As if he had ſaid, all Manner of Puniſhment is due to thoſe that indulge themſelves in this ſinful Paſſion, and live and die in it. I need ſay no more to deter you from this Sin, and to encourage you to the Practice of the contrary Virtue.

TO conclude then, cheriſh this noble Grace of Meekneſs, whoſe Office it is to allay all unjuſt Anger, and earneſtly pray that you may be inſpired with the Principles of Lenity, Gentleneſs and Love. Seriouſly lament the Want of theſe among Chriſtians at this Day, that ſo many profeſs the beſt Religion in the World, and yet are Strangers to one of the moſt indiſpenſable things in it; that they own the Goſpel, and yet are unacquainted with an evangelical Duty of the firſt Rank. Be thoroughly convinc'd and perſuaded of this, that Chriſtianity, wherever it is ſincerely entertain'd, dictates Meekneſs and Calmneſs of Spirit. And tho' ſome may ſuggeſt that this is low and mean, baſe and ſneaking, yet know this, that the Laws of that Religion, which we profeſs, commend it to us as every way worthy both of Men and Chriſtians, and our perfect and conſummate Law-giver aſſures us that this is a neceſſary Condition of Bleſſedneſs: *Bleſſed are the Meek.*

THE FOURTH
BEATITUDE
OF
Spiritual Hunger and Thirſt.

MATT. V. 6.

Bleſſed are they which do Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs: for they ſhall be filled.

HERE are obſervable, firſt, a Chriſtian Grace or Duty commended to our Practice, *Hungring and Thirſting after Righteouſneſs*: And ſecondly, the Reward which attends ſo excellent a Grace, *for they ſhall be filled.* I begin with the former, and there we may more particularly obſerve. 1. The General *Quality.* 2. The *Object* or Matter of the Grace. 3. The more *particular Nature* of it. 4. Its inſeparable *Properties.*

ITS Nature and Quality are ſet forth to us by a very common, and yet ſignificant, Metaphor, taken from the corporeal Appetites of *Hunger* and *Thirſt.* And the Reaſons, why our Saviour expreſſes himſelf in this Metaphorical Way, may be ſuppoſed to be ſuch as theſe, firſt, becauſe it is very uſual in the Stile of Scripture, to ſet forth the Affections and Operations of the Mind by theſe bodily Appetites: Secondly, becauſe there is a great Analogy and Likeneſs between theſe, as I ſhall have Occaſion to ſhew in the Sequel of this Diſcourſe: Thirdly, becauſe this Manner of ſpeaking inculcates the Matter on our Minds the more forcibly, and enables us to underſtand it more fully. Our Saviour here transfers that to the Soul which indeed is no other than a bodily Paſſion, that thereby he may make a greater Impreſſion on our Thoughts, and convey the Notice of the thing the more ſenſibly to us. For ſo it is, we are brought to plainer and more diſtinct Conceptions of ſpiritual and heavenly things, by comparing them with thoſe that are earthly and ſenſible. And this muſt needs be, ſince we are join'd to Bodies, and let in Objects to our Minds by our outward Senſes. This Way then of expreſſing divine Matters is moſt intelligible and emphatical. As there is the *New Creature* and *New-man* (in the Language of the Holy Spirit) ſo there is Food and Nouriſhment proportionable to them; and in order to this there muſt be *Hunger* and *Thirſt* anſwerable to thoſe two diſtinct Senſes or vital Qualities in the Body of Man, the Objects of which are different and various.

ACCORDINGLY the Learned *Hammond* doth diſtinctly conſider them, in treating of the Beatitudes, as they are expreſſive of the different Appetites of the Soul, which are different and various. But I will join them together under the common Notion of a *vaſt* and *great Deſire*. And that there is no Need of being nice and curious in *diſtinguiſhing* between them, I think is clear from St. *Luke*'s mentioning of this Beatitude, *Luke* vi. 21. where he names but one of theſe Appetites. *Bleſſed are ye that hunger now.* I will, I ſay, conſider them jointly, and ſo apply them to their proper and peculiar Object, which is the ſecond Thing to be taken notice of here.

THE *Termination* or *Object* of this evangelical Hunger and Thirſt is *Righteouſneſs*. As the holy and ardent Deſire of the Soul is its Hunger and Thirſt, ſo Righteouneſs is its Food to nouriſh it, and its Drink to refreſh it. Without doubt our Saviour means here his own Righteouſneſs and Merits in the firſt Place, for nothing is ſo ardently to be deſired and long'd for as an Intereſt in theſe, becauſe they are ever accompanied with Pardon and Forgiveneſs of Sin, and with the Love and Favour of God, yea, theſe can be attain'd only by this Righteouſneſs: Wherefore this is the principal Object of our Deſire. Next, by *Righteouſneſs* we are to underſtand that Sanctity which is perſonal and inherent, namely, Holineſs of Heart and Life, and the Renovation of the whole Man; all heavenly Graces, all Endowments and Gratuities of the Spirit that accompany Salvation, and all things that have Reference to our Happineſs and Welfare in another World, and conſequently all the Means of Grace, and the Ordinances of Chriſt's Appointment, Communion with God and Fruition of him, all pious Exerciſes and Endeavours, * all Virtue and Godlineſs in general. The good Chriſtian paſſionately hungers and thirſts after greater Diſcoveries of divine Truth, and an exacter Knowledge of the Myſteries of the Goſpel, after more Love and Zeal for Religion, after larger Meaſures of Charity, Meekneſs, Patience, after a greater Increaſe of Faith and Aſſurance. He longs for greater Strength againſt Temptations, and a further Conqueſt over the World and the Fleſh. He deſires to be made more comformable to the divine Image, to be more lively and vigorous, more active and unwearied in the Ways of Holineſs, and to be more prepared for Death and Judgment. All this is comprized in the Word *Righteouſneſs*. And thus we ſee what is the *Object* of our ſpiritual Hungring and Thirſting, which is briefly ſumm'd up in theſe two Words, Juſtification and Sanctification: And at the ſame time we have a *general* View of the Nature of this evangelical Duty in the Text.

Thirdly, FOR the more *particular* Explaining *the Nature* of it, I am to ſhew that 1. It ſuppoſes Emptineſs. 2. It implies a deep Senſe of that Emptineſs. 3. It ſpeaks an earneſt Deſire of Supply. Theſe three things are comprehended in the bodily Hunger and Thirſt, and they are no leſs in the ſpiritual Appetites of the Soul, which are here ſet forth by them.

Firſt, HUNGRING and Thirſting after Righteouſneſs always ſuppoſes ſome *Emptineſs*. Hungring after Food and thirſting after Drink do both ariſe from a Want of Aliment and Moiſture. So it is in the ſpiritual Hunger and Thirſt, they imply Defect, they argue ſomething to be wanting. If we ſearch and examine the inward Receſſes of our Souls, as they are by Nature, we ſhall find an unſpeakable Indigence there, a Privation of the divine Life, and a Loſs of the Image of God; a ſtrong Inclination and Proneneſs to Vice, and a Backwardneſs to all godly and holy Enterprizes. This worſt Sort of *Vacuity* is undoubtedly the Reſult of the lapſed Nature of Man: It was by *Adam*'s Apoſtacy that the Soul became void of Righteouſneſs. But beſides our original Defects, there are other moſt deplorable Wants and Poverties which we diſcover daily in our Hearts and Actions. How devoid are we of thoſe ſincere and uncorupted Principles, which ſhould actuate us in all our religious Undertakings? how defective are we, as to a true and genuine Fear of God, as to unfeigned Love of him, as to conſtant Deſigns and Endeavours to promote his Glory in the World; in brief, as to all thoſe Virtues and Graces which ſhou'd ſhine in our Lives and Practices? But this *Emptineſs*, which I ſpeak of, is only *ſuppoſed* in the ſpiritual Hunger and Thirſt, and may more properly be ſaid to be a neceſſary *Fore-runner* of the ſpiritual Appetite than to be really of the *Nature* of it. Methinks, it is like *Privation* among the Principles in the OldPhiloſophy, which was held not

* ἡ καθόλου ἀρετή. Chryſoſt. in loc.

to be of the Eſſence and Conſtitution of the thing, but preparatory only, and in order to it. Wherefore I diſmiſs this firſt Particular, and proceed to the

Second, Namely, THAT the ſpiritual Hunger and Thirſt import a real *Senſe and Feeling of our Emptineſs*. You need not to be told that Hunger in the Body is ſuch a Paſſion as pincheth and gnaweth it, and therefore cannot but be felt. When the former Nouriſhment is waſted and exhauſted, and the Stomach becomes lank and empty, it is thereupon affected with certain Pangs as it were, which are very painful. Thoſe that hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs feel a more poignant Grief and Dolour, ſuch as no Tongue can tell; but yet they will be complaining, for Hunger is always querulous: And where there is Pain and Uneaſineſs it muſt needs be ſo. But, alas! how rarely is any thing of this known or heard among us? How ſeldom is this *Senſe* of ſpiritual Want obſerved? The greateſt Numbers of Men are void of Grace and Goodneſs, but they are not ſenſible of it, they are not affected with this their ſad Condition. Even the Church of *Laodicea*, i. e. a great Part of it, *was wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked*, yet *ſhe knew it not*; nay, ſhe bragg'd and vaunted of her happy State, *I am rich*, ſaith ſhe, *and increaſed in Goods, and have Need of nothing*, Rev. iii. 17. In this Manner Men are wont to ſooth and flatter themſelves; they cry Peace, Peace, when Deſtruction is at their Doors. They ſay they want nothing, when indeed they want all things, eſpecially Underſtanding to know their Wants, and a Heart to grieve for it. But let not Men thus be deceived, and falſly perſuade themſelves into a Belief of their good Condition, for it is moſt certain that a Senſe of their Poverty and Beggary, and a free Acknowledgment of them, muſt precede their Deſire of ſpiritual Riches, and prepare them for the Reception of divine Mercy. The Senſe and Apprehenſion of our Miſery diſpoſe us for Happineſs.

BUT yet theſe alone are little worth, nay, they may prove to be our greateſt Torment: As in ſome Diſtempers of the Body we feel a Pain and Emptineſs, but without the leaſt Deſire of Food: Yea, the Senſe of Want which we feel at ſuch a time is not accompanied with an Appetite, but rather with a Loathing. So fares it ſometimes in the Soul of Man; he feels the Pains and Dolours of a guilty Conſcience; he is thoroughly apprehenſive of his manifold Sins and Tranſgreſſions; he repreſents them to himſelf in the moſt affrighting Shapes; he reckons them up with their Aggravations; he is both Jury and Judge againſt himſelf, he finds the Bill and he paſſes Sentence, and ſometimes he is ready to be his own Executioner; ſo deſirous is he to change his preſent Torments, tho' it be for greater, even thoſe of the Damned. Thus the Sinner may be extremely ſenſible of his Wickedneſs, and labour under unſpeakable Remorſe and Anguiſh for it: He may loath and abhor himſelf, and his Sins too, but not out of a kindly Diſreliſh of them, and out of a Love of Goodneſs. Theſe latter are proper only to thoſe who are regenerate and renew'd by the Holy Ghoſt: They not only feel their Want, but they ſincerely deſire to be ſupplied. Which is the

Third, AND indeed the main and moſt conſiderable thing in this evangelical Grace. As bodily Hunger and Thirſt are Appetites beſtow'd by Nature, on purpoſe to excite Creatures to ſeek after that which may ſuſtain them; ſo the ſpiritual Appetite is given to the Soul of Man, that he may thereby be effectually ſtirr'd up to look after the Nouriſhment which is fitted for his better Part, and may preſerve both his Soul and Body unto everlaſting Life. Wherefore it is always accompanied with a high Eſteem of the gracious Offers made by the Holy Jeſus, it is attended with the Love of God's Word, and an affectionate Embracing of it, in all thoſe Ways wherein 'tis uſually tender'd, whether Precepts, or Prohibitions, or Threatnings, as well as Promiſes. He that hath this ſpiritual Appetite longs after the whole Word of God, and is as ſollicitous to perform the Conditions of Salvation preſcribed by it, as to enjoy the Happineſs which is deſcribed in it. He heartily craves the Renewing of his Nature, and the Change of his Life, and earneſtly wiſheth that he may have greater Aſſiſtances of the Spirit of Grace for the mortifying of his Luſts, and the ſubduing of his vile Affections, and that by the ſame divine Aid he may be enriched with all ſpiritual Gifts, and *throughly furniſhed to every good Work*. Therefore he is properly ſaid to have the ſpiritual *Hunger* and *Thirſt*, which, beſides the Senſe of Want and Emptineſs, is ever attended with a hearty Deſire of Supply. Thus you ſee what are the main Ingredients of the Hungring and Thirſting after Righteouſneſs.

Fourthly, TO give you a farther Account of the Nature of it, you may diſcover it by ſuch *Properties* as theſe,

1. IT is always *vehement* and *earneſt*, and impatient of being ſatisfied. It is well worth our obſerving, in what Stile the royal Prophet expreſſes the Eagerneſs of his Deſires and Longings after God. *As the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks*, ſaith he, *ſo panteth my Soul after thee, O God*, Pſal. xlii. 1. The *Hart* or *Stag* (as natural Hiſtorians have informed us) is of a dry and hot Conſtitution, and conſequently is very thirſty, and ſeeks after Water. And beſides, his Abode is ſuppoſed here to be in a hot and dry Country; and not in the beſt Parts of that Country neither, but in the Deſert, in the parched Wilderneſs. And he is ſuppoſ'd to be there at the hotteſt Seaſons, when Waters are ſcarce, and almoſt dried up. Beſides, you may add that this Creature is often inflamed with the Venom of Serpents, which it is wont to devour (as Naturaliſts tell us): And ſometimes it is ſtrung with them, which increaſes its Heat. Moreover, it is an Animal that is hunted up and down: And laſt of all, imagine it wounded by the Hunter, and a Fever conſequent on that Wound. Thus joining all theſe Circumſtances together, you may gueſs how this poor Creature *pants* and *gaſps*, how it longs and ſeeks out for ſome refreſhing Streams to ſlake its Thirſt.

SUCH, juſt ſuch, were the holy Pſalmiſt's inflam'd Deſires and Anhelations after God: He was wholly bent on the Fruition of him, and nothing in the World could interpoſe, to take off the Edge and Vigour of his Affections. *My Soul thirſteth after God: when ſhall I come and appear before God?* When ſhall I enjoy the Influence of his Preſence? I muſt attain to this, or I ſhall periſh in the Purſuit of it. Thus this holy Thirſt is ardent and impatient, violent and impetuous, and not to be ſatiated, but by the Enjoyment of its proper Object. *This* can terminate it, but nothing elſe can: As the bodily Hunger cannot be ſatisfy'd with any Thing but Food, nor the Thirſt with any Thing but what is moiſt. *I opened my Mouth and panted, for I longed for thy Commandments*, ſaith the holy King, as if he were breathing his laſt, *Pſal.* cxix. 131. And he had ſaid before, *My Soul breaketh for the Longing which it hath unto thy Judgments at all Times*, ver. 20. Theſe are the raiſed Deſires, the advanced Affections, which are the inſeparable Fruits of Hungring and Thirſting after Righteouſneſs. Theſe are the ſtrong Elevations of Soul after Grace and all ſpiritual Good, which are the Evidences of the Sincerity of our ſpiritual Appetite.

2. AS it is earneſt and eager, ſo it is *conſtant* and *inceſſant*. Criticks tell us theſe Words in the Text πεινῶντες and διψῶντες, being *Particles* of the *preſent Tenſe*, denote to us the Conſtancy and Continuation of theſe Actions. As our natural and bodily Appetite returns upon us daily, and will not be put off, ſuch likewiſe ought our ſpiritual Deſires to be; their Duration is the ſame with that of our Lives. For firſt, there are new Wants and Neceſſities, and we have Need of new Strength and frequent Supplies. And ſecondly, there are new Diſcoveries of the Beauties of Holineſs, which call for new Exerciſes of our moſt affectionate Deſires. Every Prayer and ſolemn Addreſs to God, every Duty and ſacred Performance, ſets the Soul up higher in Devotion, and brings it to a nearer Communion with God. And thus the Deſires of the Soul grow *inceſſant*. The ſpiritual Appetite is like that of the Body, which is ever urgent and ſollicitous; it calls to us every Day to remember it, and ſupply it, and it is not an eaſy Matter to forget or neglect its Admoniſhments. Such is the Deſire of the pious Soul, whoſe Wants are great, and whoſe Complaints are inexorable.

3. THIS Hunger and Thirſt is ſuch an Appetite, that *a Little will not content and ſatisfy it*. A few Morſels and ſcatter'd Fragments are not able to pacify an enraged Stomach; nor can ſome ſmall Drops quench that Thirſt which is inflamed. In a reſembling Sort, the fervent Deſires of a Chriſtian are not to be allay'd with mean and low Degrees of Grace, and leſſer Meaſures of Holineſs. Pious Minds advance farther and farther, and ſtrive to attain to the higheſt Accompliſhments of Chriſtianity.

4. ANOTHER Property of this Hungring and Thirſting after Righteouſneſs is, that it gives a *Reliſh* and *Savour* to all ſpiritual Food and Refreſhment. This

Vehemency and Fervour of Deſire carries with it an unſpeakable Delight and Pleaſure. What *Solomon* ſaith of bodily Hunger is moſt certainly true of the ſpiritual one; *To the hungry Soul every bitter Thing is ſweet.* It ſweetens the harſheſt and soureſt Acts of Religion, and perfectly reconciles them to our Minds. It is this that creates a divine *Epicuriſm* in the Soul, and renders our Duty delicious and pleaſurable. [*I have longed for thy Salvation, O Lord, and* (as the natural Reſult of that, it follows) *thy Law is my Delight*, Pſal. cxix. 174.] No Wonder now that you hear the ſame Perſon cry out, *How ſweet are thy Words unto my Taſte, ſweeter than Honey to my Mouth!* It is this Hunger and Thirſt which render them ſo.

5. The ſpiritual Appetite is not nice and curious, but ſhews itſelf *indifferent* and *impartial.* No Grace or Virtue, no Duty or Exerciſe of Piety, no Fruit of the Holy Spirit is unacceptable to it. The meaneſt Inſtitution and Appointment of God is highly valued. The ſpiritual Appetite, if it be true and ſincere, is not ſqueamiſh, it nauſeates none of the ſacred Viands. It hath Regard to the whole Will of God; all the Expreſſes of the divine Pleaſure, all the Precepts and all the Prohibitions, all the Threatnings, as well as the Promiſes. It prizes Holineſs and Purity, no leſs than Pardon and Forgiveneſs, ſanctifying as well as juſtifying Grace.

6. and *laſtly*, THIS Hungring and Thirſting after Righteouſneſs is *effectual* and *operative:* It will put us upon Action, and make us careful and ſtudious to find out Repaſt for our Souls. Hunger will make its Way thro' the greateſt Oppoſitions. He that eagerly deſires the ſpiritual Food will break through all Difficulties, maſter all Hardſhips, conquer and baffle all Reſiſtances, and uſe all Means to procure that Nouriſhment, which is for the Preſervation of the ſpiritual Life. He will be daily ſupplicating the divine Majeſty, according to the Example of that holy Man, *I ſtretch forth my Hands* (ſaith he) *unto thee*; *viz.* in Prayer: *my Soul thirſteth after thee as a thirſty Land*, Pſal. xlii. 6. The Spirit of Prayer and earneſt Thirſting are joined together in the Practice of this good Man: And 'tis obſervable how fitly he expreſſes it; as the *thirſty Land*, the dry and parched Ground, gapes, as it were, for the Showers of Heaven; ſo this holy Thirſt makes him open his Mouth wide, and beg moſt vehemently, and ſtrive with God in earneſt Addreſſes to him, and wreſtle with the Almighty by an unweary'd Importunity. This alſo moves him to long moſt paſſionately for the Preſence of God in his publick Worſhip. *My Soul longeth* (ſaith he) *yea even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord: my Heart and my Fleſh crieth out for the living God*, Pſal. lxxxii. 2. And, in ſhort, what will not this holy Appetite puſh us on to? What is there, that it will not help us to accompliſh? There is nothing arduous and difficult, but it will ſtir us up to undertake and go through with. Thus I have given an Account of the excellent Grace propounded to our Practice by our bleſſed Maſter.

IN the next Place I proceed to the *Reward* adjoin'd to this Grace. Firſt, It is ſaid more generally, *Bleſſed* are they that do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs; and then more particularly, *For they ſhall be filled.* The more general Bleſſedneſs of thoſe who hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs will appear in theſe four Things,

1. THIS Deſire after Grace and Holineſs is the Foundation of all Good and Happineſs. Spiritual Objects would be of no Advantage to us, if we did not *deſire* them; for our Deſires fit and capacitate us for the Receiving and Enjoying of them, and making Uſe of them. All *Good* being *deſirable*, it is neceſſary we ſhould firſt hunger and thirſt after it, before we actually embrace it, and receive any Satisfaction from it.

2. THIS holy Appetite is an infallible Argument of ſpiritual Life in us. Dead Men loſe their Appetites with their Lives; but there can be no ſurer Indication of Life, than a Longing after Food: He that hungers is certainly alive. It is ſo with the ſpiritual Hunger: There is no greater Teſtimony of the Life of Grace in us, yea, there is no better Teſtimony of the Health of our Souls. Which leads me to the

3*d.* PARTICULAR, *viz.* That this holy Appetite is an undoubted Proof of the good Temper and hale Conſtitution of our Minds. Thoſe eager and induſtrious Sallies of the Soul argue it to be in excellent good Plight; they witneſs that it is ſound and vivid, healthful and ſtrong, and fit for a free Diſcharge of all the Actions and Functions of the ſpiritual Life. *Deſire the ſincere Milk of the Word,* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *that ye may grow thereby.* The ſpiritual Hunger is in direct Order to Growth, as Accretion in the Body is the natural Reſult of laudable Nouriſhment, and of a Deſire of it.

4. I MIGHT ſuggeſt, that this Grace is the moſt proper Qualification of this State that we are now in, and therefore, on that Account, carries ſome Portion of *Bleſſedneſs* with it. The future Life ſpeaks perfect Perfection and Fruition; but this is a State of Wiſhes and Expectations, of Longings and Pantings, and paſſionate Breathings. There can be no greater Sign of our entire Love to God and his Son Jeſus, and of our Delight in them, than our eager and paſſionate Thirſting after them. This is the grand Evidence of Holineſs, and the firmeſt Support of our Hopes of a bleſſed Life hereafter. This is the moſt we can generally do, whilſt we are on this Side of Heaven, and are abſent from our Lord, *viz.* that we can reach him with our affectionate Wiſhes and Deſires. Theſe are proper for our preſent Condition in this World, but hereafter we ſhall be employ'd in Praiſes and Exaltations, in Joy and Triumph; and our *Deſires* ſhall paſs into *Enjoyment.* Theſe relative and imperfect Paſſions ſhall at laſt be ſwallow'd up in compleat Satisfaction. For Hunger was made for *Satisfying,* and the Emptineſs which attends it is in order to *Fulneſs.*

WHICH brings me directly to the more ſpecifical Happineſs annex'd to the Duty, *they ſhall be filled.* They ſhall be fed to the full, (as the *Greek* Word ſignifies, and properly relates, as Criticks obſerve, to the Feeding of Cattle) *the Lord is their Shepherd, they ſhall not want: he maketh them to lie down in green Paſtures, he leadeth them in the Paths of Righteouſneſs,* and then they ſhall thrive, they ſhall be filled, they ſhall be ſatisfy'd. You cannot but obſerve how proportionable the Reward is to the Grace; thoſe that *hunger* and *thirſt* are promiſed to be *filled.* This latter is the natural and genuine Recompence of the former; for as thoſe Appetites were made to be ſatisfy'd, ſo the Deſires which are in the Soul were there implanted by God for the ſame End. This being the Work of the holy Spirit, he will not fail to proſper it: Theſe Longings ſhall be fully ſatisfy'd. And then, if you conſider the great Happineſs of being ſatisfy'd; *i. e.* of the Soul's being contented with the Poſſeſſion of the Thing, which it ſo earneſtly deſir'd and long'd for, you muſt needs underſtand the Excellency of this *Beatitude.*

BUT here I am to ſhew you chiefly theſe two Things: 1. That they who hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs ſhall certainly be filled. 2. That *none* but they ſhall be filled.

THE Perſons, I ſay, who practiſe the Duty of the Text, ſhall certainly receive the Bleſſedneſs here promiſed, and that, firſt, in this Life, ſecondly, in that to come.

THE hungry and thirſty Soul ſhall have its *Beginning* of Satisfaction and Fulneſs in this Life; that is, it ſhall be filled according to its Meaſure and Capacity, which is now ſtinted and contracted. But even our preſent and comparative Fulneſs ſhall ſatisfy all our Needs and Wants, and amply content our Minds, even then when they are moſt enlarged. This muſt needs be ſo, if we conſider, that *Righteouſneſs,* the Object of this holy Appetite we are ſpeaking of, is, in its own Nature, filling and ſatisfying. For firſt, it is a Thing which is real and true, ſolid and ſubſtantial. Other Things, in Compariſon of this, are but Shadows and Apparitions, Fancies and Chimera's; this only is Subſtance. My Fleſh is Meat *indeed,* and my Blood is Drink *indeed,* ſaith our bleſſed Saviour. The holy Viands are real, and therefore ſatisfactory. Secondly, They cannot but *be ſo,* becauſe they are proper and proportionable to our Souls. Philoſophy tells us, that in Nouriſhment there muſt be an Aſſimilation of it to the Body which receives it. It is certain that there is ſome *Agreement and Proportion* between our *immortal Souls* and the *Things of Heaven,* and thence ariſes that *Satisfaction* and *Fulneſs* we experience. Men cannot *feed* upon *Sounds,* nor *drink* down *Light,* becauſe they are altogether unfit for Food. So fares it with the *Soul* which is ſpiritual and heavenly: What is not proportion'd to it, and of a reſembling Nature with it, cannot content and ſatiate it. Righteouſneſs, which is the Reſemblance of God, is able to ſpeak ſomething that is agreeable to our Minds. *The Fear of the Lord tendeth to Life, and he that hath it ſhall abide ſatisfied*, Prov. xix. 23.

BUT I paſs from the inchoative and imperfect Satisfaction which this preſent Life is capable of, to that conſummate Fulneſs, which is the Acquiſition only of another World. *Thou wilt ſhew me the Path of Life: in thy Preſence is Fulneſs of Joy*, Pſal. xvi. 11. And again, Pſal. xvii. 15. *I will behold thy Face in Righteouſneſs: I ſhall be ſatisfied, when I awake, with thy Likeneſs.* The full and compleat Satisfaction of Souls is reſerv'd for the future State: Then it is that the Spirits of the Juſt, who have ſlept in the Lord, ſhall awake to a perfect Conſummation of their Happineſs; for they ſhall then be freed from all Sin, and from all Inclinations to it, and ſhall *perfectly love that which is good*: whence muſt needs ariſe Satisfaction and Happineſs; for the Happineſs of God himſelf is placed in *this*. It is in the Manſions of Glory that thoſe who have hunger'd and thirſted after Righteouſneſs ſhall be perfectly filled. The Celeſtial Food alone is able to ſupply all our Emptineſs, and prevent for the future all farther Hunger and Thirſt, begetting a full Satisfaction in the Mind. It is Part of the Deſcription of the glorified Saints, that *they ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any more*, Rev. vii. 16. Which it is probable is an Alluſion to our Saviour's Words, in *John* iv. 14. *Whoſoever ſhall drink of the Water that I ſhall give him, ſhall never thirſt; but the Water that I ſhall give him ſhall be in him a Well of Water, ſpringing up into everlaſting Life.* It is ſatisfying, and it is eternal, and therefore ſatisfying, becauſe eternal.

HITHERTO I have ſhew'd, that they who hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs ſhall be filled both in this Life and in another. Next, I am to prove, that *none elſe* but they ſhall be filled. The immortal Soul is large and capacious, and the World cannot fill its vaſt Dimenſions. It extends itſelf to greater and nobler Objects, and finds Content in them only. The great Maſters and Poſſeſſors of Riches, Honours, and Pleaſures, have own'd that they have not been ſatisfy'd with them. It may be truly ſaid of theſe Things, as it was ſaid by our Saviour concerning the Water of *Jacob*'s Well, *Whoſoever drinketh of this Water ſhall thirſt again.* They ſignify little to a rational Soul, ſince they cannot allay and ſatisfy its Deſires: Which is excellently expreſs'd by the Prophet *Iſaiah*, in Chap. xxix. 8. *Even as when a hungry Man dreams, and behold he eateth; but he awaketh, and his Soul is empty: or as when a thirſty Man dreameth, and behold he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his Soul hath Appetite.* The Man is in a Dream all the while; he doth but fancy a Kind of Satisfaction: When he awakes and rouzes his Spirits, and bethinks himſelf ſeriouſly, he finds himſelf as empty as ever, as far from Content and Satisfaction. This is a true Repreſentation of the Matter; all the Satisfaction that the Wealthy, the Ambitious, and the Voluptuous pretend to, is mere Imagination and Deluſion. We are pleaſed with Objects at a Diſtance, but when we approach to them, and begin to enter upon the Poſſeſſion of thoſe Delights which they ſeemed to offer to us, we find ourſelves deceived and abuſed; for they are not what they appear'd to be: It was our forward Fancy and Credulity that inveigled us, and gave us a Perſuaſion of their Worth. But ſound Reaſon and Experience acquaint us, that all earthly Enjoyments, in Reſpect of the boundleſs Ocean of Goodneſs, are but *the Drop of a Bucket* (as the Prophet's emphatical Expreſſion is) and therefore too mean and inconſiderable a Refreſhment for the *thirſty* Soul.

THE Prodigal Son would fain have fill'd his Belly with the *Husks*, but could not; they were not proper Food for him, (unleſs you will ſay that his degenerating into the *brutiſh Nature* alter'd the Caſe). The Things of this World are worthleſs Husks, mere ſapleſs Films and empty Shells, and hold no Reſemblance to the ſpiritual Appetite. *There are three Things which are never ſatisfied, yea, four Things ſay not, It is enough*, ſaith the Wiſe-man. I may add a fifth, namely, the Soul of Man, which is not, and cannot be ſatisfy'd with the Things of this World, which have Vanity and Vexation entail'd upon them. All the Entertainments of it are not ſufficient to repleniſh the vaſt Capacities of our immortal Minds, and to yield them any ſolid Content. Laſtly, to evince this

Truth, let me appeal to your Conſciences, and demand of you in good Earneſt, whether you did ever find yourſelves ſatisfy'd with the Fruition of what this World afforded you? Could you ſit down contented, and acquieſce in it? Have you not experienced a ſilent Longing after ſomething better? Could you be perſuaded to look upon theſe Things as your ultimate Good and Happineſs? I cannot think that any underſtanding and good Man ever did; and he certainly is the moſt competent Judge in this Caſe. But though all the Earth will not ſatiate one ambitious and covetous Man, yet one Heaven will ſerve and ſatisfy all the Servants of God; for the Promiſe runs thus: *Bleſſed are they that do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled.*

AND thus I have diſpatch'd the doctrinal Part, I come to the *Application* of all that hath been ſaid, and

Firſt, THIS Text ſharply *reproves* the Miſcarriages of too many that bear the Name of Chriſtians, eſpecially three Sorts of Perſons.

1. A JUST Reproof lights upon thoſe who are lukewarm and indifferent in Religion. What a Shame is it, that thoſe, who make a Profeſſion of the beſt Inſtitution, and are bid to hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, ſhould be low and flat in their Deſires and Appetites? Where are their affectionate Longings after God's Word, and Communion with him, and the great Concerns of another World? What mean your faint and phlegmatick Wiſhes, your dull and languid Deſires, your perfunctory Endeavours? What is become of that ancient Vigour and Ardency, which poſſeſs'd the Breaſts of the primitive Chriſtians? Where is the vehement Panting and Breathing after God and Religion, which thoſe devout Souls expreſs'd? Where is the *acid Humour* which ſhould whet your Appetites, and make you impatiently hunger after Righteouſneſs? What is the Reaſon that Chillneſs and Faintneſs ſeize on your Spirits, when you are to be engaged for Heaven, and the Salvation of your Souls? Why do you reſt in a cold and dull Neutrality? Why are you benumm'd and beſotted, as if you were altogether unconcerned in a future Life, or as if Heaven were nothing worth? This Decay and Want of Appetite is too true a Symptom of a conſumptive Temper, a ſpiritual Atrophy, and Death it ſelf.

2. THOSE are reproved, who hunger and thirſt (not after Righteouſneſs, but) the Pleaſures and Profits of this World only. Here Men are greedy and ſharp-ſet, though, as to other and better Things, they are ſo dull and flat. In the Body we conclude it to be a diſeas'd Appetite, which is delighted with and hankers after Traſh and Things unwholeſome, yea, and is delighted with Coals and Dirt. Undoubtedly it is an Indication of the Soul's being ſickly and diſtemper'd, when it longs moſt after the Things which are mean and ſordid, dirty and vile; when it loaths Manna, and is pleaſed only with Garlick and Onions, and the Fleſh-Pots of *Egypt*. How greedy are Men generally of Riches and earthly Advantages? How vehemently do they purſue the Gratification of their luſtful Deſires? Theſe are here reprov'd by our Saviour's Doctrine.

3. ALL thoſe who hunger and thirſt after *Unrighteouſneſs*, after the Commiſſion of any Sin whatſoever (as well as that of Worldlineſs before-mention'd) are here ſeverely rebuked. What great Numbers are there of thoſe that commit all Sorts of Wickedneſs with Greedineſs, and are reſtleſs and unſatisfy'd 'till they have brought to paſs their impious Deſigns, and aſpire to the utmoſt Degrees of Vice, and affect a Tranſcendency in it, and are ambitious of arriving to the Height of all Villainy and Debauchery? None can doubt whether theſe be not broadly check'd by our Saviour here.

Secondly, THIS Doctrine of the Text, as it *reproves* the general Practice of Mankind, ſo it is Matter of *Comfort* to weak and infirm Chriſtians, whoſe Graces are not yet mature and perfect. If they can ſay in Sincerity, that they hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, they have no Reaſon to be diſcouraged and dejected. The hearty Deſire of Grace is a Diſpoſition to it; yea, and may be call'd Grace. One of our Preachers is offended at this, and ſaith, * *It is a ſtrange Conceit that ſome People have been taught, that the Deſire of Grace is Grace.* And another tells us, that † *It is a great Miſtake in Divinity, that the Deſire of Grace is Grace.* But the Miſtake is on his Side, for if ſincere *Deſire* be a Note of *Bleſſedneſs*, (as we ſee it is) then 'tis a Note of

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* *Kettlewell*'s Meaſures of Obedience, Book 3. Ch. 3.

† Dr. *Tillotſon*'s Sermon, of the diſtinguiſhing Character of a good and bad Man.

Grace; for Bleſſedneſs is annexed only to Grace. This Deſire is the Beginning of Grace, and it is a Part of it; juſt as the Deſire and Longing after evil and vicious Objects is ſinful, and a Degree or Part of Sin. Again, when this Writer ſaith, Deſire of Grace is not Grace, it is eaſily confuted from this, that no Man is gracious or good, that doth not deſire to be ſo; and if he can't be ſo without that Deſire, then it is certain, that that Deſire is a Part of his Goodneſs. And this very Author, at another time, confeſſes the contrary, to what he here ſaith, for, * ſpeaking of the *preparatory* Works of Regeneration, namely, Sorrow, Terror of Conſcience, Conſideration, Reſolution, he grants, that theſe are a Part of Regeneration, and a Degree of real Goodneſs; and he deſpiſes it as *an idle Contention about Words*, to diſtinguiſh *preparatory Works of Regeneration*, from *Regeneration it ſelf*. *The Work is begun*, he ſaith, whilſt they thus *prepare*. And ſo here *Grace* is begun, whilſt there is a ſincere *Deſire* of it. None but captious Men would oppoſe this, for the Thing is very plain and evident, and therefore was taught in the common Ethicks of the Gentile *Moraliſts*; one of whom ſaid rightly, † *It is a great Part of Goodneſs, to be willing and deſirous to be good.*

* Sermon the *4th.* on *Gal.* viii. 5.

† *Seneca*

If then you find this in you, be of good Chear. Remember that it is propheſied of Chriſt, by the evangelical Prophet, in *Iſai.* xlii. 3. and is applied in Mat. xii. 20. *A bruiſed Reed ſhall he not break, and ſmoking Flax ſhall he not quench*, but he will gently blow it up into a Flame. Your weak Graces ſhall be ſtrengthened and confirmed; and thoſe Graces, which are languiſhing in you, ſhall more abundantly be cheriſhed. Let this be received as a true Maxim, that your Wiſhes, (if they be ſincere and fervent) your Deſires, (if they be conſtant and vigorous) are accepted of God. A hearty Deſire to repent and believe are Breathings from the holy Ghoſt; and therefore, having him for their Author, they cannot miſcarry. Theſe proceeding from the Spirit of Grace ſhall be nouriſhed, and increaſed by the ſame Spirit. Theſe holy Deſires are the Seed of Grace, ſown in the Heart, and they will in due Time ſprout forth, and be fruitful. Here is Comfort to poor dejected Souls. If you find that you pant and breathe after God, that you earneſtly deſire to have your Sins ſubdued, and your Hearts and Lives reformed; you have no Cauſe to deſpond, your Condition is ſafe. Though you feel many Doubtings and Diſputes in your Minds, though you have many Fears and Miſ-givings in your Hearts, many Diſquietments and Perplexities, concerning your future State; yet let this one Thing compoſe your Thoughts, that you are heartily deſirous to walk uprightly before God, and to ſhun the Vanities of the World, and to keep a good Conſcience.

This is that which you muſt ſeriouſly ask your ſelves, Have you a real Senſe of your Wants and Failings? and are you grieved for them? do you long for higher Meaſures and Degrees of Grace? do you heartily deſire to conform yourſelves more and more to the divine Will, and in every Thing to comply with God's good Pleaſure? do you find your Hearts thus diſpoſed? Then you may pronounce your Caſe to be no ways dangerous, but on the contrary, you may aſſure yourſelves, that there is Ground of Solace and Joy: Eſpecially in the Hour of Temptation and Deſertion, when Satan aſſaults and buffets you, when your Conſciences are preſs'd with the Burden of your Sins, then make uſe of this comfortable Doctrine. Remember that a hearty Deſire to do Things pleaſing in God's Eyes is acceptable to him. This Beatitude, in the Text, belongs to you, and you may aſſure yourſelves, that you ſhall be *filled* and ſatisfied, that the Grace, which is already begun in your Souls, ſhall in due time be finiſhed.

And if you would be aſſured of the Truth and Reality of your Deſires, you may try them by theſe ſhort Rules, which I have enlarged upon before. The Deſire of Grace is true, when it proceeds from a deep Senſe of our Unworthineſs; when it proceeds from a Diſcovery of the Excellency of ſpiritual and divine Things; when it is importunate and reſtleſs; when it is active and vigorous, and uſes the Means which are proper for the obtaining what is deſired: In a Word, When our Deſires paſs into Endeavours, then we may conclude them to be genuine and ſincere. You then that are weak in Faith, be encouraged hence, Know that unfeigned Hungring and Thirſting after Righteouſneſs are an Argument of true Righteouſneſs. If you heartily deſire Grace, you have the Beginnings of it, and thoſe Beginnings ſhall be brought to Perfection.

Thirdly, LET me *exhort* you to put this Duty in Practice. Be as eager and ſollicitous in your Purſuits after Grace and Holineſs, after Heaven and Happineſs, as you are wont to be, in order to the ſatisfying your natural and bodily Appetites. You read at what Rate the Apoſtles and primitive Saints deſired their Souls Welfare and Salvation: After the ſame earneſt and zealous Manner *we* ought to act. For Shame let it not be ſaid, that we are more concerned for Earth than Heaven, that we long after worldly Pleaſures, with a more vehement Strain and Fervour of Soul, than we do after the Delights and Raviſhments of a better Life. Let it not be ſaid, that you have more tranſcendent Flames for the World, than for your Maker; that you are more ambitious of Honour and earthly Advantages, than of the Glories of the Manſions above; that you find greater Reliſhes of Joy and Pleaſure, in the Commiſſion of Vice, then you experience in the Service of God.

AND that your ſpiritual Appetite may be rectified, that you may effectually hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, (which I have exhorted you to) engage yourſelves to the diligent Obſervance of theſe following Rules.

1. SEE your own Emptineſs, be ſenſible of your ſpiritual Want and Poverty. This (as I told you, when I entered upon theſe Words,) is always implied in the Notion of that Hunger and Thirſt, which are attributed to the Soul. It is now proper, in this Part of my Diſcourſe, to call upon you reduce it to Practice. The ſpiritual Hunger of the Soul, like that of the Body, (to which I have ſo often compared it) is never ſtirring and active, unleſs there be ſome *Indigence.* Endeavour to feel this: Apprehend the preſent Want you lie under. *Help thou my Unbelief*, was the Language of that poor diſtreſſed Man in the Goſpel. The Senſe of Infirmity makes Way for the divine Help, and farther Supplies of Strength. It firſt puts us upon deſiring them, and then it moves God to confer them. If we perſuade ourſelves that we are full, and lack nothing, we ſhall not hunger. Whereſore we are concerned by all Means, to get a Senſe of our Want, to ſee our miſerable and loſt Condition: And from this Sight and Senſe of it, we ſhall be induced, through God's co-operating Grace, to deſire a Relief. From a ſerious Reflection upon our own Poverty, we ſhall be ſtirr'd up to look after the durable Riches, which are from Chriſt alone; we ſhall ſet a Value on the gracious Tenders of it: Until we have arrived to this, it is impoſſible to entertain becoming Thoughts of our Lord's Undertakings; until we attain to this, we ſhall ſit down contentedly in our preſent State of Miſery, and never enquire after a Redreſs of it. Let us then be careful to remove out of our Minds all over-weening Thoughts of ourſelves. Self-conceit in our Hearts, like Wind in our Stomachs, ſwells and puffs them up, and, at the ſame time, takes off their Edge and Appetite. Pride will hinder us from applying ourſelves to him who is the only Author of our Happineſs.

2. IF we would attain to the excellent Grace in the Text, we muſt throw off all Worldly-mindedneſs; if we would earneſtly breathe after Heaven, let not the Earth engroſs our Cares and Thoughts; when we are wholly concerned for the periſhing Things of this Life, and glut ourſelves with ſenſual and temporal Delights; how is it poſſible we ſhould have any Appetite for thoſe that are ſpiritual and divine? Be careful then, to baniſh all inordinate Love of the World; let not your your ſecular Intereſt ſo poſſeſs your Minds, as to exclude the Thoughts, and hinder the Proſecution of thoſe better Concerns. In brief, empty yourſelves of the World, that you may hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs.

3. BE ever endeavouring to apprehend the wonderful Sweetneſs and Delicacy of it. This, if any Thing, will excite your ſpiritual Appetite. This made St. *Paul* ſo ardent in his Affections toward it, *I count all Things*, ſaith he, *but Loſs, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord*; *for whom I have ſuffered the Loſs of all Things, and do count them but Dung*, (the worſt Sort of Refuſe) *that I may win Chriſt*. Phil. iii. 8. There is no *Excellency* like that of *Chriſt*, and his *Righteouſneſs*. If we have right Conceptions of *this*, we ſhall deſire and long after *them* in a proportionable Manner: Whereſore let us thoroughly underſtand their unparallel'd Worth, and the matchleſs Benefits which accrue to us by them.

4. SEE the *Neceſſity* of this evangelical Righteouſneſs. To which Purpoſe, ſeriouſly conſider thus with yourſelves, There is a Hunger and Thirſt of the Soul

of Man, as well as of his Body: And as God hath provided Nouriſhment anſwerable to the latter, ſo he hath made as plentiful Proviſion for the Supply and Suſtenance of the former. Now, as the Body, if it be long deprived of Meat and Drink, grows faint and feeble, and unfit for its proper Employment; ſo the Soul, if it hath not its Food and Refreſhment, becomes weak, and languiſhes, and is unable to diſcharge its peculiar Services, which relate to God and Religion. Men generally want no Motives and Exhortations to take care of their Bodies; nay, they are often too indulgent to them, and are over-ſollicitous about the Matters which appertain to them; but we are all apt to neglect the Concerns of our better Part, our immortal and heaven-born Souls. Whilſt Men glut and ſurfeit their Bodies, their Souls are pined and famiſhed, and they wilfully omit the Uſe of thoſe Means, which, through the Divine Bleſſing, might nouriſh, refreſh, and ſtrengthen them. But who doth not ſee, that the good Plight of their Souls ought to concern them more nearly than that of their Bodies? They are bidden, in a comparative Senſe, *not to labour for the Meat which periſheth.* The Body is but ſubſervient to the Soul: How unreaſonable then is it, that That ſhould be pamper'd and provided for in the moſt exquiſite Manner, and This, in the mean Time, be ſtarved thro' Want of its proper Nouriſhment? This is no ways acccountable; and were not Men arrived to a very high Degree of Impudence and Effrontery, they would bluſh at the bare Mentioning and being reminded of this groſs Miſcarriage of theirs. The Soul is a thouſand Times more conſiderable than the Body, and therefore common Reaſon will dictate, that the good Eſtate and Welfare of the former is to be preferred before that of the latter. If Men provide for their earthly and mortal Part, they are much more obliged to do the like for that which is heavenly and immortal.

WEIGH then theſe Things well with yourſelves, and be perſuaded, that the Care of your Souls is indiſpenſably required of you. You are ſenſible enough of the Want of daily Refection for your Bodies; you ſee there is no ſubſiſting long without it; for there is in our Bodies that in-bred Flame, which is continually preying on all its Parts, ſo that there is a Neceſſity of repairing and maintaining this innate Fire with conſtant Supplies of Fuel. This perpetual Conſumption calls for a daily Reſtauration. Thus it is in our *Souls* alſo, they *periſh* in the Scripture Senſe, they die, and are deſtroy'd for ever, without the conſtant Recruits of Grace and Pardon. There is no Spiritual Life without theſe. We are loſt beyond all Hopes of Recovery, without the Righteouſneſs which is by Faith, without the inward Purgation of our Conſciences, and without the efficacious Application of Chriſt's Merits. The Spiritual Suſtenance is abſolutely requiſite for the *Renewing* in us whatſoever hath been decay'd by the Fraud and Malice of the Devil, or by our own carnal Will and Frailneſs. The Conſideration of this is an excellent *Oretic.*

5. OFTEN meditate on the *Fulneſs of Chriſt*, *the Fulneſs of him that filleth all in all*, as the Apoſtle moſt excellently expreſſes it, *Eph.* i. 5. and again, *Col.* i. 16. *It pleaſed the Father*, *that in him ſhould all Fulneſs dwell.* This is he that is *made unto us of God*, *Wiſdom*, *and Righteouſneſs*, *and Sanctification*, *and full Redemption.* 1 Cor. i. 30. He is both able and willing to relieve our Wants: *Able*, becauſe he is every way furniſh'd for that End. In him are treaſur'd up all Things that are deſirable, or neceſſary, for the Satisfying of the Soul. *I am*, ſaith he, *the Bread of Life*, John vi. 35. In the Stile of Scripture, *Bread* ſignifies all that is fit for our bodily Subſiſtence; and accordingly we are bid to pray for *our daily Bread*, that is, whatever is neceſſary and uſeful for the Life of Man. So the *Bread of Life* is whatever is requiſite for the Welfare of the Soul. Chriſt, in giving himſelf for us, *gives us Grace and Glory*, *and no good Thing doth he withold* from us. And he is *willing*, as well as able, to effect our utmoſt Good: Elſe why doth he invite and intreat us to receive his Mercy? *If any Man thirſt*, *let him come unto me*, *and drink.* John vii. 37. *Ho! every one that thirſteth*, *come ye to the Waters*, *and he that hath no Money*; *come ye*, *buy and eat*, *yea come*, *buy Wine and Milk*, *without Money*, *and without Price. Wherefore do you ſpend your Money for that which is not Bread*, *and your Labour for that which ſatisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me*, *and eat ye that which*

is good, (which is ſolid and ſatisfying) *and let your Soul delight in Fatneſs. Iſa.* lv. 1. &c.

6. SEARCH the Holy Scriptures, for they are they that teſtify of Chriſt and his Fulneſs, and ſet before you the Excellency of the Spiritual Food, and ſhew the abſolute Neceſſity of it. The Word of God, if you impartially conſult it, will make you ſenſible of the Violation of his Laws, and of the Wrath and Vengeance which you are obnoxious to on that Account. It will let you know *Whom* you have offended, and it will ſhew you your utter Inability to make Satisfaction for your Offence; and hereupon it will ſend you to the *Mediator of the New Covenant*, the Undertaker for loſt Man, who was *made Sin for us, that we might be made the Righteouſneſs of God in him.* Thus the inſpired Volume will not only give us a Sight of our Miſery, but conduct us to our only Happineſs. This will lead us to the Fountain ſet open for Sin and for Uncleanneſs, and will alſo, through the divine Operation, open our Eyes to ſee it, and to make uſe of it effectually.

7. LET me commend to you this, in order to your hungring and thirſting after Righteouſneſs, learn to make a good Uſe of, and to improve all the afflictive Accidents of your Lives. Our Appetites are uſually ſtrongeſt and eagereſt in the Winter; ſo the cold and ſharp Seaſons of Affliction are ſerviceable to make us more earneſt in our Deſires after Grace, and the Author of it. Who was more ardent and zealous in his Longings after God, than Holy *David*, who was a Man of Affliction and Sorrow thro' the greateſt Part of his Life? He had never *thirſted* ſo vehemently after Communion with God and Enjoyment of him, if the *Arrows of God had not ſtuck faſt in his Soul, and drunk up his Marrow.* If this *Partridge had not been hunted upon the Mountains*, he had not *breath'd* and *ſigh'd* ſo paſſionately for the Divine Aid and Relief. If this *Hart* had not been *chaced* and *perſecuted*, he had not *panted* ſo greedily after the *Water-Brooks.* In the Day of Calamity the Soul hath an actual Experience of the World's Vanity and Emptineſs, and thence is taught to look for Fulneſs and Satisfaction where it only is to be had, and to breathe and long for it in the Way of Righteouſneſs.

8. Try what Righteouſneſs is, make a real Eſſay and Experiment of it. *Taſt and ſee that the Lord is good*, as that Saint adviſes. You complain, that you have no Eſteem for the Ways of God, that you hunger not after the Food of Life: Indeed how ſhould you, unleſs you taſte it, and try what it is? The Connection of thoſe Words is obſervable, 1 *Pet.* ii. 2, 3. *As new-born Babes deſire the ſincere Milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby, if ſo be you have taſted that the Lord is gracious.* Your Taſting the Spiritual Refreſhments will provoke your Appetite, and whet your Deſires.

Laſtly, To ſhut up all, pray, that your Nature may be thorowly changed. This is the Principle of all your Deſires, as the Appetites in our Bodies are according to our Temper and Conſtitutions. *The natural Man receives not the Things of the Spirit of God*, ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* ii. 14. and therefore he doth not, he cannot thirſt after them: He reliſhes not the Things of Heaven, becauſe his Palate is vitiated and depraved. Wherefore pray unto God for a new Nature; humbly beg of him, that he would *renew you in the Spirit of your Minds*, that he would ſo effectually alter the Frame, Inclinations, and Tendencies of your Souls, by the Influence of his Holy Spirit, that your Hearts and Affections may be taken off from proſecuting whatever is vain and ſinful, and that you may moſt fervently long for the Communications of the Sanctifier and Comforter; that all your Wiſhes, Deſires, and affectionate Breathings after Holineſs and Happineſs may be conſtant and inceſſant, never knowing any Period, 'till they are at laſt ſwallowed up and ſatiated with thoſe Rivers of Pleaſure, which run at God's Right Hand for evermore.

THE FIFTH
BEATITUDE.
OF
MERCIFULNESS.

MAT. V. 7.

Bleſſed are the Merciful, for they ſhall obtain Mercy.

THIS is as uſeful and excellent a Grace as any of thoſe before named by our Saviour: For Mercifulneſs is a Branch of Love, and the genuine Iſſue of Divine Charity, and therefore cannot but be a great Accompliſhment of the Chriſtian Religion. It was indeed the Opinion of the *Stoicks*, that it was below their wiſe Man to be pitiful; it was a Thing unbecoming him, to commiſerate the Sadneſſes of others. They were afraid that this would ruffle and diſcompoſe the Serenity of his Soul. *Lipſius* therefore adhering to the Men of that Sect, eſpecially to his Maſter *Seneca*, (whoſe very Words he makes uſe of) defines *Mercifulneſs* to be a [*] Vice which poor and ſneaking Minds are ſubject to, whereby they faint at the Appearance of another's Miſery. Mercifulneſs is [†] the Sickneſs of the Soul, (ſaith the ſame Author) and 'tis ſuch a Sickneſs as can't befal a wiſe Man. *Tully* agrees with him, and tells us, that [||] he is a Fool, and a light Perſon, that is merciful: Not but that theſe great Men qualify theſe Sayings in other Places of their Writings.

But tho' the Generality of the ſullen *Stoicks* expell'd this Grace out of their Ethicks, and would not ſo much as allow it the Name of Virtue, yet Chriſt Jeſus adopted it into his excellent Philoſophy, and preſents us with it as no contemptible Accompliſhment of Mankind. This is not the Endowment of the weak and effeminate, (as ſome have imagined) but of the more generous Sort of Men, and ſuch as are of a manly Spirit. For (as the admirable *Des Cartes* ſaith in his *Treatiſe of the Paſſions*) it is the Part of *Generoſity to wiſh well to every body*, and *to endeavour their Welfare*, if we are in a Capacity to effect it; which we can never do, unleſs we be ſtirred up by this Virtue. The only Enemies to this are the Malicious and Envious, and ſuch as, by their curſed Temper, are Haters of Mankind; or elſe thoſe who are ſo ſtupify'd and beſotted with Proſperity, or render'd ſo forlorn and deſperate by their continual Calamities and Sufferings, that they perſuade themſelves, that no farther Evil can befal them: Theſe, and only theſe, are void of Commiſeration, and a pitiful Reſentment of the Miſeries of their Neighbours. But where true Religion and a Senſe of Goodneſs poſſeſs Mens Hearts, this noble Endowment is ever

[*] Vitium puſilli minutiq; animi ad ſpeciem alieni mali collabentis.

[†] Ægritudo animi ob alienarum miſeriarum ſpeciem: Ægritudo autem in ſapientem virum non cadit. *Sen.* de Clem. cap. 4.

[||] Pro Murenâ.

ever obſerved to take place. This is that Evangelical Grace wrought in us by the Holy Ghoſt, whereby we are intimately touch'd and affected with the Evils that befal others, and endeavour, according to our Ability, to help and relieve them.

I WILL ſpeak of it then, firſt, as it is an *inward Act and Operation of the Mind*, as 'tis a Diſpoſition and Affection of the Soul; ſecondly, as it diſcovers and diſplays itſelf in *outward and viſible Signs*, the more apparent Effects and Fruits of this Grace. There is ἔλεος, and there is ἐλεημοσύνη: This firſt is an *Affection*, the ſecond is *Action*. *Mercifulneſs* is compounded of both: It is pitying, and it is ſuccouring thoſe that are in Miſery. The primary Seat of it is in the Heart; but its Influence is on the whole Life. The inward Habit is accompany'd with proportionable Acts and Exerciſes: Whence you read of *Mercy and good Fruits*, Jam. iii. 17. The inward Principles excite to outward Endeavours, and ſo the Grace becomes viſible and operative.

Firſt, MERCIFULNESS, as it is an inward Affection, is a Compoſition of *Grief* and *Love*; Grief, for the Troubles we ſee others labour under; Love, becauſe we have a Kindneſs for the Perſons. The firſt main Ingredient of this Paſſion, or rather of this Divine Grace, is a *Grieving* for and *Sympathizing* with the Calamities of our ſuffering Brethren. According to both the great Philoſophers of *Greece* and *Rome*, it is a voluntary * Sorrow and Languiſhment of Mind, by reaſon of the Evils and Miſeries which others are afflicted with. This is that which in Holy Scripture is ſo often called *Bowels*, and ſometimes *Bowels of Mercy*, and *Bowels of Compaſſion*. For this moving Affection was thought to have its Reſidence in thoſe Parts of the Body which the *Greeks* and *Latins* call'd † *Bowels*; and at this Day among Anatomiſts, the *Heart* and *Liver* and *Spleen* (as well as the lower Entrails) are known by that Name. This is that which St. *Paul* means, when he would have *all the Members ſuffer together*, 1 Cor. xii. 26. all have a Fellow-feeling of one another's Diſtreſſes. The other main Ingredient of this Grace is *Love* or *Benevolence*. The merciful Man is he that is kind-hearted, and tenders the Good of others as his own; who delights in the Thoughts of charitable Enterprizes, and is big with Reſolutions and Purpoſes to accompliſh them. Thus we ſee this Chriſtian Grace is moſt excellently temper'd and compounded; and accordingly we may expect, that the Reſults and Effects of it will be very uſeful and advantageous. Which is

THE ſecond Thing I am to proceed to: The *Effects* of Mercifulneſs are as long as the Neceſſities and Miſeries of our Brethren. I will reduce them to theſe two Ranks: Firſt, thre are ſome Acts of Mercifulneſs, which reſpect the *Souls*; ſecondly, others, which have Reference to the *Bodies* of Men. As to the former, it is certain, that Sin makes a Man truly miſerable; and therefore our Compaſſion is no where ſo indiſpenſably due as here. But I conceive this ſpiritual Pity is not that which is intended by our Saviour in this Place; for this was Part of another Beatitude, *Bleſſed are they that mourn*. And beſides, *Mercifulneſs* is applied in the Stile of Chriſt and his Apoſtles (as well as in the Old Teſtament) to that Compaſſion and Charity which reſpect the outward Condition of Men, not their Sins and Vices. Therefore I will wholly underſtand this preſent Beatitude concerning that merciful Diſpoſition, and thoſe Acts of Mercy, which have Regard to the outward Afflictions and Diſtreſſes of our Brethren. In reſpect of theſe, the Offices of Mercifulneſs towards them are ſuch as theſe, to feed the hungry, to cloath the naked, to viſit the ſick, and to adminiſter Things for their Recovery, to aſſwage the Pains of the tortured, and to cure the diſeaſed, according to our Skill and Ability; by no means to oppreſs our Brethren, or uſe them hardly, but to give or lend to ſuch as lack, to aſſiſt the diſtreſſed, to ſuccour and help them in their Streights, to give them friendly Advice, to protect them from thoſe that would injure them, to be forward to put an End to all Quarrels and Controverſies, and to uſe all Perſons we converſe with kindly and obligingly.

TO be more particular, we are to be careful and obſervant, as to the *Objects* of our Mercifulneſs. It was good Advice of the Son of *Sirach*, *When thou wilt do good, know to whom thou doſt it*. Eccleſ. xii. 1. Know whether the Perſon be the

* Λύπη ἐπ' ἀλλοτρίοις κακοῖς. Ariſtot. Ægritudo ſuſcepta ob miſeriam alienam. *Cic.*

† Σπλάγχνα, Viſcera.

the right Object of thy Benevolence. For tho' it is a good and charitable Act to give Money or Food, or the like, to thoſe whom we deem to be in Want, altho' they are Cheats and Counterfeits, ſuppoſing I know them not to be ſuch, (for my Act is good, becauſe it ſprings from a free Principle of Charity, and a Deſign to do good) yet I ought to know the true Condition and Circumſtances of the Perſons I give Relief to; otherwiſe I act imprudently, and thereby marr my Charity. Wherefore I am obliged to guide it by ſuch Rules as theſe,

1. OUR Bowels ſhould yearn, and our Hands ſhould be ſtretched forth, towards thoſe whom we know to be really good and holy. It is true, the Bad as well as the Good are the Objects of our Charity. In the Caſe of extreme Neceſſity, there is no Man ſo wicked but may demand our Relief. We muſt not then look ſcrupulouſly on the *Perſon*, but tender his *Condition* and Want. At ſuch a Time, the vileſt and prophaneſt Miſcreant may challenge our Pity and our Charity. For if we muſt out of Mercy relieve even the brute Beaſts, and help and deliver them, when they are in Danger, then ſurely thoſe of our own Kind muſt be regarded by us. Beſides that, God cauſeth the Sun to ſhine and the Rain to fall on the Evil as well as the Good, and thereby gives us a ſignal Encouragement to *Univerſal* Charity. But his *eſpecial* Eye of Favour is on the Good and Holy; and ſo muſt ours be in our Deeds of Charity. I cannot abſolutely commend to you that Advice of *Tobias* to his Son, *Give nothing to the Wicked*, Tob. iv. 17. nor that of *Eccleſiaſticus*, xii. 7. *Help not the Sinner:* But this may be ſaid with ſome Aſſurance, that thoſe that are good, in an equal Degree of Want and Poverty, are to be relieved before the Wicked. *As we have Opportunity, let us do good unto all Men, eſpecially unto them that are of the Houſhold of Faith*, Gal. vi. 10. the true Members of Chriſt, ſuch as are, as it were, of his Family.

2. THOSE, to whom we are more nearly related by the Bonds of Nature, may very well challenge the next Rank in our Order of Mercifulneſs and Kindneſs. Grace does not cancel the Obligations of Blood and Affinity, but makes them ſtronger and more binding.

3. THOSE who ſtand moſt in need of our Charity, whoſe Wants are moſt urging and preſſing, whoſe Miſeries cry loudeſt for Relief, are the moſt proper and preſent Objects of our Mercy. Such I reckon to be poor diſtreſſed Widows and fatherleſs Children, aged and decrepid People, who are paſt their Labour, the ſick and diſeaſed, decayed Houſekeepers, diſconſolate Captives and Priſoners, thoſe that have a numerous Charge, and but little Income to maintain them, and all ſuch whoſe Grievances are very great and deplorable. That of *Tully* alſo is not contemptible; * *Thoſe* (ſaith he) *who do not make their ſad Condition known to us, are more to be pitied by us than thoſe who importunately haunt us.* The Reaſon of this is, becauſe thoſe who are bold, and have the Face to beg of every one, meet with conſiderable Relief, whereas thoſe that are modeſt, and conceal their Wants, get but little, and conſequently ſtand the more in need of our Pity.

THUS our Mercifulneſs and Charity are to be managed with Prudence and Choice. For tho' Charity to the Poor be urged with great Vehemence in Scripture, yet we are guilty of a great Miſtake, when we think, that the *Generality* of the Poor are meant; and that we are bound to give to *any* that aſk our Alms. No, they are the diſtreſſed Saints that are generally meant in the New Teſtament; and as for others that are in Poverty, there is no Relief due to them, if they voluntarily reduce themſelves to Penury; eſpecially if they continually keep themſelves indigent by Idleneſs, and by Intemperance and Sottiſhneſs, or any other vicious Ways, as moſt of our Poor do. Or, if they can work, and are thereby able to earn their Livelihood, but wilfully refuſe to do it, the greateſt Mercy and Charity we can ſhew to theſe, is not to relieve them; for by this we ſhall puniſh their Idleneſs, and teach them to betake themſelves to ſome Employment. And as for Vagabonds and common Beggars, the beſt Alms we can beſtow upon them is to procure their Correction and Puniſhment.

I MIGHT proceed yet farther, and add here what *Solomon* aſſerts, *Prov.* xii. 10. *A righteous Man regardeth the Life of his Beaſt; but the tender*

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* Eorum nos magis miſeret qui noſtram miſericordiam non requirunt, quàm qui illam efflagitant. *Orat. pro Mil.*

Mercies of the wicked are cruel. There is a Mercifulneſs, and there is a Cruelty even towards the brute Creatures; and every good Man (as he hath Occaſion) exerts the former, and abhors the latter. You will find, that in the Law, which was given by God to the *Jews*, there are Directions to ſhew Humanity even to Beaſts, as in *Deut.* xxii. 1, 4. and in other Places. The Law about *not muzzling the Mouth of the Ox* hath Reference to this. And *Philo* thinks, that when the *Jews* are forbid to *ſeethe a Kid in its Mother's Milk*, the Prohibition ſavours of Mercifulneſs towards brute Creatures, namely, that they muſt not at the ſame Time kill the Dam and the young one. And perhaps an *Ox* and an *Aſs* were forbid to be yoked together, not only becauſe they differ in Kind, and one is clean, the other unclean, and ſo not to be joined together; but becauſe they are of unequal Strength, one infirm in reſpect of the other, and therefore not to be put to the ſame Labour and Work with it. And theſe Laws are in Force ſtill, under the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel. Cruelty to any Creature is unlawful now under Chriſtianity. It is ſinful to take Pleaſure in the Pain and Hurt of the moſt contemptible Animal. We are obliged by an innate Principle of Pity to be merciful even to thoſe living Creatures, which are of a Rank far below us, and by no means to delight in grieving and tormenting them. Much more then ſhould we be favourable to our own Kind: And it is not to be doubted, that we are commanded to uſe the Brutes kindly, that we may learn thence to be merciful to our Brethren. He that ſhews Clemency towards irrational Natures will not eaſily be ſavage to his own Kind. He that is not cruel to other Creatures will extend a more paſſionate Love and Pity to the rational Beings. *Doth God take care for Oxen?* (ſaith the Apoſtle) 1 *Cor.* ix. 9. Was it God's chief Intention in that Law to provide for thoſe irrational Creatures? *Or ſaith he it altogether for our ſakes? for our ſakes no doubt*; namely, to teach us Humanity, and eſpecially (as the Apoſtle applies it) towards thoſe that take Pains for us. That we may be tender-hearted and loving to Men, we are bid to be kind to the Beaſts.

THUS I have explained the true Nature and Extent of this Evangelical Grace. I muſt now proceed to ſhew you what Title it hath to *Bleſſedneſs. Bleſſed are the merciful, for they ſhall obtain Mercy.* Which is exactly agreeable to what the Royal Prophet aſſures us of, in *Pſal.* xviii. 25. *With the merciful thou wilt ſhew thyſelf merciful.* Firſt, they ſhall find Mercy from God to their own Perſons: Secondly, to their Children and Poſterity: Thirdly, in the World to come, after the higheſt and moſt extenſive Manner.

I WILL ſhew you, in the firſt Place, That the merciful Man finds the bleſſed Effects of ſhewing Mercy, even as to himſelf, and his own perſonal Concern; and that in two Reſpects, firſt, in regard of *Temporal*, and then in reſpect of *Spiritual* Benefits. As for the former, I might evince it from ſeveral Teſtimonies in Sacred Writ, as that in *Deut.* xv. 7. *If there be among you a poor Man, thou ſhalt not harden thy Heart, nor ſhut thy Hand from thy poor Brother: Thou ſhalt ſurely give him, becauſe that for this Thing the Lord thy God ſhall bleſs thee in all thy Works, and in all that thou putteſt thy Hand unto.* Again, more particularly and fully in *Pſal.* xli. 1, *&c.* *Bleſſed is he that conſidereth (i. e.* pitieth and relieveth) *the Poor: The Lord will deliver him in Time of Trouble. The Lord will preſerve him and keep him alive, and he ſhall be bleſſed upon the Earth, and thou wilt not deliver him into the Will of his Enemies. The Lord will ſtrengthen him on the Bed of Languiſhing, thou wilt make all his Bed in his Sickneſs.* As much as to ſay, he ſhall find Mercy in Time of Need, and when it will be moſt welcome. *He that hath Pity on the Poor lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again.* Prov. xix. 17. *He that giveth unto the Poor ſhall not lack.* Prov. xxviii. 27. He that ſincerely, and without Vain-glory and Oſtentation, diſpenſes his Alms to the diſtreſſed, ſhall never want a Supply for himſelf.

I MIGHT confirm this Truth by the experimental Succeſs of many good and charitable Perſons. *Luther* was a Man of great Compaſſion, and conſtantly gave conſiderable Sums to the Poor; and he tells us, that he kept an Account of theſe Diſburſements, and found he gained by them. *That Sentence,* ſaith he, [*Give, and it ſhall be given unto you*] *maintains my Houſe.* The Lord *Harington,*

Harington, Mr. *Mede*, Mr. *William Whately* contemporary in the ſame College with Mr. *Mede*, Dr. *Hammond* of the other Univerſity, gave conſtantly the tenth Part of their yearly Revenue to the Poor, and obſerved they were Gainers by it. Yea, this laſt Perſon, that I named, did not only devote the Tenth of all his Incomes yearly to the Poor, but ſet apart every Week a certain Allowance, beſides the Alms given at his Door. And this, he aſſures us, he found to be the Way of increaſing his Eſtate, and commends it to others, as a ſure Method of thriving and proſpering. And he challenges any Obſerver of paſt or preſent Times, to give one Inſtance of a Chriſtian Almſgiver, that ever brought himſelf or his Poſterity to Want by Liberality to the Poor. And hear what another ſaith, * *What little Money I have by me, I got it, I ſcarce know how, in that Time when I gave moſt.* I will here alſo adjoin the remarkable Words of that excellent Perſon Judge *Hale*, who ſpeaking of Deeds of Charity to the Poor, and the Advantage accruing by it, ſaith thus, || "I can ſafely "and without Vanity ſay, I have hitherto found this Truth "(*viz.* that which *Solomon* ſaith, *Prov.* xix. 17.) exactly "fulfill'd. In thoſe Weeks and Years wherein I have ſowed ſparingly, I have "even in Temporals reaped ſparingly. And I ever found when my Hand was "moſt liberal, I never loſt by it, but found a Return an Hundred-fold more "than my Expence." Thus, from the Experience of theſe good Men, you are aſſured that Charity is the beſt Husbandry. To be kind to the Poor, is the Way to be rich; to relieve the Neceſſitous, is one Method of thriving in the World. The *Talmudiſts* and *Rabbins* have a Saying, that *a Man ſhould ſalt* or *ſeaſon his Riches*; they mean with the Salt of Alms; and then his Riches will not corrupt; yea, then they will increaſe, and be a Bleſſing to him.

TO ſhew yet further, that Mercifulneſs is attended with worldly and outward Advantage, I may ſuggeſt, that this excellent Grace is of ſuch a Nature, that it procures Love and good Will; it makes Men to be loved and careſſed, and is a Spiritual Kind of Charm. It influences not only on the better Sort of Men, but on our moſt implacable Adverſaries. Which, without Doubt, is the Meaning of the Wiſe Man, *Prov.* xxv. 21, 22. *If thy Enemy be hungry, give him Bread to eat, and if he be thirſty, give him Water to drink*, (that is, relieve his Neceſſities) *for thou ſhalt heap Coals of Fire on his Head*; thou ſhalt mollify and melt him, and effectually work upon him, and overcome his Fury and Revenge. This is the admirable Vertue and Power of this Grace. Whilſt we oblige others, we befriend ourſelves; we conſult our own temporal Good and Welfare in our Acts of Mercifulneſs.

But ſay, that this meets not with a Reward as to Things Temporal, yet it ſhall not fail of it as to thoſe that are Spiritual. Tho' it finds not kind Uſage from Men, it ſhall obtain Mercy from God. *To do good and to communicate forget not, for with ſuch Sacrifices God is well pleaſed.* Heb. xiii. 16. Theſe are Sacrifices that are always acceptable to God, and he will ever take notice of them for our Good. *I know thy Works and Charity*, ſaith Chriſt to the *Church of Thyatira*, Rev. ii. 19. I have not forgot thy Love to the diſtreſſed Saints; tho' thou art at preſent under Streights and Afflictions, thou may'ſt expect that thy antient Service ſhall not go unrecompenſed. This made holy *Job* ſo earneſt in his own Defence, when he was accuſed by his Friends of ſundry Crimes, and among the reſt of Unmercifulneſs and Uncharitableneſs. He pleads his Innocency, and calls God to witneſs, that, as to this, he was blameleſs, *he withheld not the Poor from their Deſire, he cauſed not the Eyes of the Widow to fail, he eat not his Morſel alone, but let the Fatherleſs eat thereof.* He was ſo far from oppreſſing the Poor and Needy, that he made Conſcience of being kind and charitable to them. And this he alledges in order to his own Comfort and Content; for he knew that God hath a ſpecial Care and Regard to thoſe whoſe Hearts and Hands have been open to the Poor.

AND as this is a Proof of our being in the Favour of God, and our being lov'd by him, ſo it is an Argument of our Love to him. This is the Determination of the great Maſter of Love, 1 *John* iv. 21. *He who loveth God, loveth his Brother alſo.* The one is evidenced by the other, as the ſame inſpired Author

* Mr. *Baxter*, in his Life.

|| Diſcourſe of the Knowledge of God, and of ourſelves. *Part* 2. *chap.* 28.

thor lets us know in the third Chapter of that Epiſtle, *ver.* 17. *Whoſo hath this World's Goods, and ſeeth his Brother in need, and ſhutteth up his Compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him?* Who will believe him, when he ſaith he loves God, if there be not this Proof of that Love, namely, that he is affectionate and charitable to his Brethren, who bear the Image of God as well as himſelf?

This is alſo a good Sign of Repentance, and abandoning our Sins, as appears from *Daniel's* Advice to *Nebuchadnezzar, Break off thy Sins by Righteouſneſs, and thine Iniquities by ſhewing Mercy to the Poor.* Dan. iv. 22. Yea, this is made one Moiety of true Religion by St. *James, chap.* i. *v.* 27. *Pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to viſit the Fatherleſs and Widows in their Affliction.* And we are told by our Lord himſelf, that it is the diſtinguiſhing Character of his Diſciples; *By this ſhall all Men know, that ye are my Diſciples, if ye have love one to another.*

AND among the Spiritual Advantages, which accrue by Love and Mercifulneſs, this is one of the chiefeſt, that it is a Demonſtration of our honouring God. *He that honoureth his Maker hath Mercy on the Poor.* Prov. xiv. 31. Whence the Apoſtle tells us, that the Exerciſe of Charity and Beneficence to the diſtreſſed *cauſeth Thankſgiving unto God,* 2 *Cor.* ix. 11. yea, *many Thankſgivings unto God,* ver. 12. And thus the Moſt High is glorify'd by our Charity, which is the greateſt Thing that can be ſaid, to prove the *Merciful* Man to be *Bleſſed* in his own Perſon.

Secondly, HE is bleſſed with reſpect to his *Relations* and *Poſterity:* Which is thus ſet forth by the *Pſalmiſt, He hath diſperſed, he hath given to the Poor: His Righteouſneſs endureth for ever. His Seed ſhall be mighty on the Earth: The Generation of the Upright ſhall be bleſſed.* Pſal. cxii. 2. And the ſame inſpired Writer tells us, from his own Experience, That *he had been young, and now was old, yet had not ſeen the Righteous forſaken, nor his Seed begging Bread. He is ever merciful, and lendeth, and his Seed is bleſſed.* Pſal. xxxvii. 26. The Poſterity of good Men ſhall receive the Rewards of Mercifulneſs. Think then of this, ye Sons of Mercy! when you give to the Poor, you lay up a Portion for your Children. They ſhall afterwards find the Benefit of it; for God will raiſe up ſome merciful Men to relieve *them.* Your Relations ſhall ſhare in what you give to the Needy. I am perſuaded, that this is the Meaning of *Solomon's* Words, in *Eccl.* xi. 1. *Caſt thy Bread upon the Waters, for thou ſhalt find it after many Days.* Where the Duty of Charity is moſt elegantly expreſs'd, by *caſting of Bread on the Waters.* The Poor and Indigent are rightly compared to *Water,* the weakeſt Element; and Alms-Deeds, or Works of Charity, are fitly called *Bread,* becauſe the Poor are fed and nouriſh'd by them, or becauſe *Bread,* properly and ſtrictly ſo called, and all Things which are neceſſary for the Suſtenance and Comfort of Man's Life, (which are alſo ſtiled *Bread* in the Stile of Scripture) are procured by this Charity. Or, perhaps, *Bread* may be put for *Seed,* of which Bread is made. Thus 'tis ſaid, *Out of the Earth cometh Bread,* Job xxviii. 5. that is, out of the Earth ſpringeth that Seed or Grain whereof Bread conſiſteth: And the Caſting the Seed *on the Waters* ſignifies the beſtowing it not in a dry and barren Ground, but in a moiſt and fruitful Soil. Thus, in *Iſa.* xxxii. 5. *to ſow beſides all Waters,* is to ſow in the beſt Ground. And thus if theſe Words be an Alluſion to *Sowing,* they are conformable to the Language of Scripture in other Places, where the charitable Diſtributing of our Alms is compared to the Husbandman's Sowing of Corn. Having thus examined the Phraſe and Manner of Expreſſion, that is here uſed to ſet forth the Duty of Charity, I am now to conſider the Reaſon which the Wiſe Man makes uſe of to excite us to the Practice of it; *For thou ſhalt find it after many Days.* Which implies, that at the preſent our Alms are as it were loſt; the Bread is caſt away on the Waters; it is drowned and ſunk for a while, we hear no Tidings of it, but it will float above Water afterwards. Therefore be not diſcouraged; for tho' perhaps thou may'ſt not reap the Fruit of thy charitable Gifts to the Poor preſently after thou haſt beſtow'd them, yet be aſſured, that in due Time thou ſhalt find it to thy Comfort and Joy, or thy Relations ſhall find it gainful, thy Poſterity ſhall have the

Advantage of thy Bounty to others. When thou art compaſſionate to the Needy, thou makeſt Proviſion for thy Children, thou conſulteſt the Welfare of thy Family. Thus *thou ſhalt find it after many Days.*

Laſtly, THE merciful Man ſhall obtain Mercy in another and better World, in that Life which ſhall never have an End. *Give to the Poor, and thou ſhalt have Treaſure in Heaven*, ſaith our Saviour, *Mat.* xix. 21. And again, he thus ſpeaks in *Luke* xii. 33. *Give Alms, provide yourſelves Bags, which wax not old, a Treaſure in the Heavens that faileth not.* And in *chap.* xvi. *ver.* 9. *Make to yourſelves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlaſting Habitations*; that is, that at the laſt Judgment you may be conſigned to everlaſting Bliſs and Happineſs. And therefore we may obſerve, that at that Day there will be a ſpecial and particular Regard to Acts of Mercy and Deeds of Charity: *I was a hungred, and ye gave me Meat: I was thirſty, and ye gave me Drink: I was a Stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me*, &c. Mat. xxv. 35. Thoſe, that have been kind to the diſtreſſed Members of Chriſt here, ſhall be everlaſtingly rewarded hereafter, *Theſe ſhall go into Life eternal*, ver. 46. This is the Gain, this is the Advantage of Mercifulneſs; thoſe that exerciſe this Grace make ſure of eternal Bleſſedneſs. To this Purpoſe moſt excellently the Apoſtle, in 1 *Tim.* vi. 17, 18. *Charge them that are rich in this World, that they do good, that they be rich in good Works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate, laying up in Store for themſelves a good Foundation againſt the Time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal Life.* By Charity they lay that Foundation whereon are built the Manſions of Glory. By giving to the Poor they provide eternal Riches for themſelves; by a charitable Diſpenſing their temporal Goods they obtain an Evidence of their Intereſt in the everlaſting Joys. I think I need ſay no more, to ſhew the Advantage, both in this Life and in the other, which accrues to us by Mercifulneſs and Charity. And thus I have diſpatch'd the chief Materials of the Text, having explained the *Duty*, and ſhewn the *Reward* annexed to it.

HENCE then, firſt, it is eaſy to tell *who* are to receive a ſharp *Reproof*, namely, thoſe who are ſo far from being *merciful*, that they are *ſavage* and *cruel*, and rejoice in the Miſeries of their Brethren. There is nothing ſo refreſhing and pleaſing to them as Miſchief. The Death and Ruin of others give them Life and Spirit. They are never ſo merry as when they ſee others lamenting. Such a one was the cruel and barbarous *Sylla*, once Dictator of *Rome*, but the bloodieſt Man that ever bore that Office, by whom it was reputed and puniſh'd as an intolerable Crime, to look upon the dying Innocents with any Pity and Relenting. Another Example of *Roman* Barbarity was that ſavage Emperor, whoſe uſual Order to the Executioner was, *Be ſure you ſtrike leiſurely, that the Delinquent may have Time enough to feel the Pains of your deadly Stroke.* And the ſame Perſon is infamous for this, that he forced Parents to be preſent at the Execution of their own Children. Yea, I could obſerve to you, that Cruelty was inlay'd in the very Religion of the *Pagans*; for we read, that they oftentimes ſacrificed their Children inſtead of their Beaſts. And truly they might well ſacrifice *them* whom they were wont to *expoſe*, which is an Uſage defended by one of their * greateſt Philoſophers. I might add, that it was the common Entertainment and Paſs-time of the *Romans* to behold the bloody Prizes of the Gladiators, who ſlew one another openly.

IN the next Place be *exhorted* to practiſe this admirable Grace, which is ſo excellent in itſelf, and hath ſo great a Reward attending it. In *Heb.* xiii. 15. the Apoſtle enjoins us to *offer the Sacrifice of Praiſe to God continually, that is, the Fruit of our Lips.* But becauſe this is little worth without the Fruit of our Lives, he adds, *To do good, and to communicate, forget not.* Whatever you do, be ſure of this, that you omit not the Seaſons of Charity and Beneficence; ſee, that, according to your Ability, you ſupply the Wants of your diſtreſſed Brethren. You do well in *offering up Praiſes* to God, in commemorating his Mercies, in acknowledging his Goodneſs and Bounty; but beſides this *Oblation*, you muſt remember, that there is *another to be offer'd*; you muſt give of your Subſtance to the Poor, you muſt relieve your indigent Brethren. See then that you conſcientiouſly perform this duly.

* *Ariſtot.* in Politic.

AND to encourage you to it, I deſire you firſt to repreſent to your Thoughts the divine and heavenly Nature of this Virtue. *Mercifulneſs* is that which is the moſt eminent Perfection of God, and which, in a more ſignal Manner, diſtinguiſheth him from the evil and infernal Spirit, who is made up of Malice and Cruelty. Mercifulneſs therefore muſt needs be *our* higheſt Perfection and Excellency; for it is the greateſt Accompliſhment of Man to be like unto God. By partaking of this noble Attribute, we do, in a moſt illuſtrious Manner, reſemble the divine Nature, as was acknowledg'd by the great *Latin* Orator, as he is cited by St. *Auguſtin*; * Mankind, ſaith he, never makes a nearer Approach to Divinity than by this tranſcendent Virtue.

AGAIN, Take not only a *general* View of this excellent Attribute in God, but ſeriouſly conſider how infinitely merciful he hath been to *you* in particular. Think how you live every Moment upon the divine Mercy Mercy and Goodneſs; and then 'tis impoſſible but you ſhould be compaſſionate and kind to others. God hath been pleas'd to declare, that *in all our Afflictions he is afflicted*; he is a Partner with us in our Sorrows and Diſtreſſes: And ſhall not this move us to give all Evidences of a tender and affectionate Heart towards our Brethren? But more eſpecially let us conſider the inexhauſtible Treaſures of divine Philanthropy, which were ſo ſignally diſcover'd in the Undertaking of the *Meſſiah*. It was *Mercifulneſs*, it was *Charity*, that caus'd the Son of God to leave the Manſions of Glory, and to viſit this lower World: It was this that made him go about doing good; it was this that moved him to undergo a Life of Poverty, Trouble and Perſecution; it was this that prevail'd with him to lay down his Life, and ſhed his precious Blood for us. And what now ought to be the Conſequence? Surely this, that we be kind and charitable to our Brethren. *If God ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another*, 1 John iv. 11. A moſt ſound and rational Inference. Wherefore let us liberally extend our Mercy to our poor Brethren, and never be backward to beſtow upon them the good Things of this World, and to ſuccour them in all their Neceſſities both of Body and Soul. Let us be tender-hearted even to the worſt of Men, on the Conſideration of our own Unworthineſs and Vileneſs, and of God's merciful bearing with us, notwithſtanding our heinous Provocations. *I beſeech you, Brethren*, ſaith St. *Paul*, *by the Mercies of God*, Rom. xii. 1. What more prevalent and obliging Motive could he have uſed? And what more powerful Argument can we make uſe of to ſtir ourſelves up effectually to the Duty of the Text? I pray God we may find the happy Influence of it on our Hearts and Lives.

IN the next Place, ſet before you the vile and curſed Quality of the contrary Vice, together with the direful Judgments which accompany it. Conſider that Unmercifulneſs is unnatural and unworthy of a Man: Thoſe two are fitly coupled together in *Rom.* i. 31. *Without natural Affection, unmerciful.* Yea, it is deviliſh, and moſt agreeable to the State of Hell and infernal Darkneſs; for it is the Guiſe of thoſe malicious Spirits to delight in doing Miſchief, to procure the Miſery of Mankind. It is no Wonder then that Curſes and Judgments are denounced againſt thoſe that are of this diabolick Spirit: The whole 20th Chapter of *Job* will furniſh you with theſe, eſpecially the 22d and 23d Verſes, *In the Fulneſs of his Sufficiency, he ſhall be in Straits; every Hand of the Wicked ſhall come upon him: When he is about to fill his Belly, God ſhall caſt the Fury of his Wrath upon him.* And again, in Verſe 27, &c. *The Heaven ſhall reveal his Iniquity, and the Earth ſhall riſe up againſt him; the Increaſe of his Houſe ſhall depart, and his Goods ſhall flow away in the Day of his Wrath. This is the Portion of a wicked Man from God, and the Heritage appointed to him by God.* That this *wicked Man* is the *unmerciful Perſon*, and that this fearful Doom lights on him upon that Account, is evident from the 19th Verſe, *Becauſe he hath oppreſſed and forſaken the Poor*, &c. becauſe he hath been *unmerciful*, therefore all theſe Plagues and Judgments ſhall come upon him. He muſt not expect Mercy from Heaven, who never ſhew'd any to his Brethren, who never knew what Compaſſion meant: Which is agreeable to that of St. *James*, Chap. ii. Ver. 13. *He ſhall have Judgment without Mercy, who hath ſhewed no Mercy.* This might be made good to you in ſundry

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* Homines nullâ re propriùs ad Deum accedere quàm hâc virtute. *De Civ. Dei.*

dry notable Examples, as thoſe of *Pharaoh* and *Herod*, and others mentioned in the Sacred Hiſtory; of *Sylla*, in the *Roman* Story before-mention'd; of *Andronicus* in the Eaſt, who delighted in the Blood and Slaughter of his Subjects. Theſe all came to a miſerable End, as the juſt Reward of their cruel Practices; and from thence we learn that Unmercifulneſs is ſignally puniſhed, and retaliated even in this World. But if it eſcape the divine Vengeance here, it ſhall certainly meet with it hereafter. The Terror of which may be effectual to reſtrain us from this Vice, and to cauſe us to nouriſh in our Breaſts all Tenderheartedneſs and Pity, and to diſcover the Effects of theſe in our Lives and Actions.

THERE are ſeveral other *Motives* which I might make uſe of: I will briefly name ſome of them. We may be excited to Acts of Mercifulneſs from this Conſideration, that the charitable Perſon hath the Prayers and Bleſſings of the Poor, in lieu of what he gives to them. Therefore we have heard before, that we are *to do good, eſpecially to thoſe who are of the Houſhold of Faith*; we muſt chiefly take care to relieve the Religious and Pious, and ſo we may expect that the effectual fervent Prayers of theſe Righteous Perſons will avail much on our Behalf; the Returns of their Prayers will be well worth our Alms; and whatever we beſtow upon them, will flow back again to us with unſpeakable Advantage.

ANOTHER Motive to Charity, eſpecially towards thoſe that are good and fear God, is this, that what Kindneſs is ſhew'd to them, is accounted by Chriſt to be done to himſelf; *Verily, I ſay unto you, inaſmuch as ye have done it unto the leaſt of theſe my Brethren, ye have done it unto me*, Matt. xxv. 40. Thoſe that *cloath*, and *feed*, and *viſit* the diſtreſſed Servants of God, are ſaid to clothe, and feed, and viſit *Chriſt*. What we give to his poor Members, we give to him. In relieving them, we relieve our Saviour himſelf: The Conſideration of which ſhould make us tender-hearted towards his and our Brethren, and ſtir us up to do all Offices of Love and Charity to them.

AGAIN, we are to conſider that we are not abſolute Lords of what we poſſeſs, but are only Receivers and Stewards. Our Riches were given us not to ſpend as we pleaſe, but as the great Lord and Proprietor of them hath appointed. And we know that it is his Appointment and Pleaſure that we ſhould beſtow ſome Part of the good Things we have, on thoſe that are in Want and Neceſſity. This is not a Thing indifferent, we are not left to our Liberty, but we are indiſpenſably obliged, as we are Stewards and Truſtees, to diſcharge this Duty, to do Acts of Beneficence and Charity to our Brethren, to diſpenſe and diſtribute to them a Portion of thoſe worldly Goods which God hath intruſted us with: He hath made us his Receivers and Almoners, and we are to take Care to diſcharge that Office faithfully and ſincerely.

THERE are other Motives and Arguments yet behind; but I will propound only one more, and that I will largely inſiſt upon. It is the Royal Preacher's Argument in *Eccl.* xi. 2. *Give a Portion to ſeven, and alſo to eight, for thou knoweſt not what Evil ſhall be upon the Earth*; that is, thou knoweſt not whether thy Life ſhall be prolong'd or not, for the *Evil upon the Earth*, which is here mentioned, may particularly refer to Death, which is vulgarly accounted one of the greateſt Evils. Therefore do Acts of Mercy whilſt thou art in the Land of the Living, for thou knoweſt not how ſoon thou may'ſt be call'd hence. Beſides, tho' thou may'ſt ſurvive, yet thou knoweſt not what Calamity may befall thee, whereby thou may'ſt be render'd unable to relieve thy indigent Brethren. God may, in his Providence, take thy earthly Bleſſings from thee, and ſtrip thee naked of all or moſt of thy temporal Enjoyments. *Riches make themſelves Wings, and fly away*; and all our Art and Skill cannot ſtop them in their Flight, or bring them down to our Lure when they are upon the Wing. Innumerable Accidents and Caſualties there are, any one of which may rob us of our earthly Accommodations. A raging Fire, a violent Wind and Storm, unſeaſonable and hurtful Weather, an unhealthful Body, a numerous Charge, undutiful and rebellious Children, the Falſeneſs of Friends, or the Malice of Enemies, may conſume that Eſtate in a ſhort Time which had been long gathering. Thus the Time may come, when thou ſhalt not be in a Capacity to give a Portion to *ſe-*

ven and to *eight*; yea, not to a leſſer Number; the Fuel of thy Charity may be ſubſtracted, and thou can'ſt not, if thou would'ſt, warm and chear the Diſtreſſed. But then how ſad an Arreſt will it be to thy Thoughts, when thou remembreſt that God gave thee heretofore Ability to relieve others, but thou didſt not. God bleſſed thee in thy *Basket* and in thy *Store*, but thou didſt keep the former ſo cloſe ſhut, that never any poor Man could receive a Dole out of it; and thou didſt ſo careſully lock up the latter, that none were ever the better for it.

WHEREFORE uſe and employ theſe Things well, whilſt you have them, for you are not able to promiſe your ſelves any Thing for the future; ſo great are the Changes and Viciſſitudes made by Providence in the World. But it will be a comfortable Reflection to you, that you were kind to others in their Diſtreſſes; and you may expect that God will diſpoſe the Hearts of merciful Perſons to relieve you in your preſent Exigences.

THE Apoſtle, exhorting to Chriſtian Compaſſion, makes Uſe of this Argument in *Heb.* xiii. 3. *Remember thoſe that are in Bonds, as bound with them; and them which ſuffer Adverſity, as being your ſelves alſo in the Body.* As if he had ſaid, If you weigh well your own Circumſtances, you cannot but be convinced that it is your Duty to pity thoſe who are afflicted and diſtreſſed: *You* are in the Body as well as *they*; you are liable to the Croſſes and Troubles of this World no leſs than they; your Condition doth no more exempt you from bodily and outward Calamities than theirs; therefore you are engaged to extend your Compaſſion to thoſe poor Priſoners and Sufferers, for you know not how ſoon you may be in Bonds and Adverſity yourſelves, what Streights and Difficulties you may be reduced to; but thoſe very Perſons, whom you relieve now, may be able and willing to ſuccour you then. Here is an excellent Piece of Chriſtian Policy: Here is an innocent Plot for Futurity.

THUS I have ſet the *Wiſe Man*'s Argument before you, and you ſee how pregnant it is. The Duty of Mercifulneſs is forced and urged upon you by a very rational Motive.

To conclude; I remember *Macrobius* reports, that the *Athenians* built a Temple to *Mercy*, and no Perſon was permitted to enter into it without ſome previous Acts of Pity and Benignity. Whereupon the Citizens were ambitious of doing Works of Mercy and Charity: And it grew honourable, ſaith he, to be thought worthy to have Acceſs to that Temple. And on the contrary, it came to be as great Reproach and Diſgrace as any whatſoever, for an *Athenian* to hit his Neighbour in the Teeth with this, that he never was in the *Temple of Mercy*. Know this, that the whole Frame and Fabrick of the Chriſtian Religion is a Temple ſacred to *Mercy*; and there can be nothing more ſhameful and reproachful to a Chriſtian than not to frequent this Temple, that is, to ſhew Mercy and Compaſſion to his Brethren, to be beneficial to their Souls and Bodies. Let it, I beſeech you, be in great Eſtimation among you: Strive who ſhall be moſt affectionate and pitiful; and reckon it the greateſt Honour to be rank'd among ſuch, and to adorn your Profeſſion by Works of Mercy. Hereby *Plato*'s Hypotheſis will take Place in the World, that is, Virtue will aſſume a Vehicle, a Body, and become viſible and perſpicuous to all Mens Eyes, and conſequently will be admir'd for its Beauty and Lovelineſs. This would be the beſt Way to ſet off Religion, and to commend it to the World, and to gain Proſelytes every where to it, and (as the happy Reſult of that) to advance the Glory and Honour of the great God throughout the Earth.

THE SIXTH BEATITUDE OF *Purity of Heart* or *Sincerity.*

MATT. V. 8.

Bleſſed are the Pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God.

MY whole Endeavours on theſe Words ſhall be employ'd in theſe four Things; *Firſt*, I ſhall give you a true Idea or Repreſentation of the Chriſtian and Evangelical *Purity*. *Secondly*, I ſhall perſuade you to the *Practice of it*, and aſſiſt you therein. 1. By ſhewing the Excellency of this Grace, together with the Deformity and Miſchief of the contrary. 2. By ſetting before you the proper Means of attaining the one, and baniſhing the other. *Thirdly*, I will diſcover the Nature of that *Bleſſedneſs* which is made the Reward of *Purity*, and ſhew the *Connection* between them. *Fourthly* and *laſtly*, I will draw ſuch *Corollaries* from the Whole as are moſt proper.

Firſt, It will be worth your Pains to ſearch into the true Nature of this Evangelical Grace, and give you the right Idea of it. Accordingly I will diſplay it, 1. Negatively. 2. Poſitively. 3. Comparatively. I will ſhew what it *is not*, and then what *it is*; and afterwards I will acquaint you with its *Oppoſite*.

1. This *Purity* here ſpoken of *is not* a bare Privation of Impurity. It is not that which a School-man would call a *Negative Purity*, that is, a bare * Negation of Impurity. It is not like the Purity of a tranſparent Body, which is indeed void of Spots and Stains, but hath no excellent Tincture or Colour in it to recommend it to the Eye. It is not a blank Table, which is not blotted and blurr'd; but then 'tis as true that nothing at all is written and contain'd in it. Such a Kind of Purity is a poor and mean thing: It is a low Accompliſhment, and carries no great Commendation with it. Such, without doubt, is not the *Evangelical Purity*, which hath ſome intrinſick and poſitive Excellency in it.

2. It is not an External, Ritual, Legal and Phariſaic Purity. It is ſaid here with an Emphaſis [the Pure *in Heart*] as contra-diſtinguiſh'd from bodily and outward Purity. What *the Heart* ſignifies in the Stile of Holy Scripture is well known, namely, all the Faculties of the Soul, the Underſtanding, Judgment, Will, Affections, Conſcience, Inclinations, Deſires and Purpoſes. The chief Scene of the Chriſtian Purity is in theſe: That it conſiſts not in outward

Waſhings

* The *Hebrews* have a Word which repreſents this very fitly. *Nakah* is both *vacuus* and *purus*. And ſo the Subſtantive *Nikkaion* is *vacuitas* and *mundities*.

Waſhings and Purifying of the Body, or Garments, or Veſſels, is plain from Chriſt's ſharp Reproof of the *Phariſees* Practice in *Matt.* xv. 17. and in ſeveral other Places, which I ſhall have Occaſion to mention afterwards. The Laws concerning the outward and accidental Uncleanneſs of the Body are aboliſh'd under the Goſpel. It is the inward Purity and Cleanneſs that is accounted for under the Evangelical Diſpenſation, and which will entitle us to Bleſſedneſs.

3. This Purity is not complete and abſolute, it is not a perfect and entire Freedom from all Sin and Pollution. This is not attainable in this Life, where we labour under the Infirmity of our Nature, and are obnoxious to Temptations. It is that which the glorified Saints and bleſſed Spirits only have arrived to, not frail and mortal Men in this Priſon of Fleſh. Whilſt we live in theſe Houſes of *Clay*, *Defilements* and *Impurities* will more or leſs adhere to us. We have all of us ſome Mixtures and Allays of Vice, and we fall every Day; but we ought to riſe and recover ourſelves by hearty Repentance, and purſue our Duty with all Sincerity and Integrity.

Which leads me to the *Second* Thing I undertook under the firſt general Head, namely, *Poſitively* to aſſign the Nature of the Chriſtian Purity. This conſiſts in theſe two Things, the *Sincerity* of our *Deſigns*, and of our *Actions*. *1ſt*, There muſt be a Rectitude of our Ends and Aims in all that we do. *2dly*, Our Endeavours after Purity muſt be upright.

I begin with the former: That Integrity, in which the Chriſtian Purity conſiſts, requires that we propoſe to ourſelves right Ends and Aims in all that is done in Religion. Which take in theſe three Particulars;

1. We muſt do every Thing with Regard to the divine Will and Commands, and in Obedience to theſe. Sincerity is call'd *Singleneſs of Heart*, Eph. vi. 6. (I think it ſhould rather be render'd *Simplicity of Heart*) and it is thus deſcribed, that what we do ſhould be done *as unto Chriſt*, ver. 5. *as unto the Lord*, ver. 7. What is here required of *Servants*, is required of all Men; they muſt perform all their Acts of Religion, and whatever elſe they are employ'd in, with an Eye to the divine Precept and Rule, either general or particular, for that is the Standard of all Actions. We are to ask ourſelves in all we undertake or execute, whether it be regulated by the Will of God. We are Servants, and we muſt conſult the Pleaſure of our Maſter. We muſt meaſure our Duty by the Will of God; we muſt obey him becauſe he is our Lord, becauſe he hath abſolute Power and Sovereignty over us. As it belongs to him to enjoin us what he pleaſes, ſo 'tis our Part to have Reſpect to that Injunction, and to ſubmit to it becauſe it is his, becauſe he will have us do ſo. This is true *Simplicity of Heart*.

2. The Purity or Sincerity of the Goſpel looks directly to the Glory of God. All our Exerciſes of Religion are to tend to the exalting of God's Name in the World. Yea, *whatſoever we do*, we are to *do it all to the Glory of God*, according to the Apoſtle's Direction in 1 *Cor.* x. 31. This, according to the ſame Apoſtle's Way of ſpeaking, is *living unto the Lord*, Rom. xiv. 8. doing every Thing in our whole Lives with Regard to the Author of our Beings, and of all the Bleſſings we enjoy, and with pure Intentions to ſpread his Glory, and magnify his Name and Excellencies.

3. We are alſo to act with ſincere Deſigns of promoting the Good and Welfare of our Brethren, and all whom we converſe with. Chriſtian Purity renders us upright towards all Men: It makes us free and open in our Words and Profeſſions, candid and ingenuous in our Converſe and Dealings, and puts us upon ſtudying the true Methods of being uſeful to our Fellow-Members. In brief, it is the Office of Sincerity to direct us to conſult the Benefit of our Neighbours in all Things, and to tender their Good as our own. Thus Sincerity regulates a Man, as to the *Ends* and *Reſpects* of his Actions.

And then 'tis not to be queſtion'd whether it teaches him to lay aſide all *ſiniſter* and *baſe Ends*. He is not religious, becauſe it is modiſh and faſhionable, or becauſe it proves gainful and profitable. He doth nothing in Religion out of mere Cuſtom or Formality, or merely from the Influence of Example. He is not moved and acted by the Conſideration of Repute and Applauſe among Men: But he performs his Duty as in God's Sight, and *his Praiſe is not of Men, but* *of God*, Rom. ii. 29. He depends not on the Judgments and Cenſures of others, but approves himſelf to God in the Diſcharge of a good Conſcience, and he abhors nothing more than to ſeem to be what really and indeed he is not. He looks upon that as a choice and admirable Rule which a great Moraliſt hath left, * *Attain to a Simplicity in thyſelf.* Do not double, and act falſly. Whatever Enterprize or Action thou art engag'd in, propound to thyſelf right Ends and Aims. This is *Purity of Heart* or *Intention*, which is the firſt Thing that Evangelical Purity conſiſts in.

THE next is the *Sincerity of our Perſons*, *our Endeavours* and *Actions*, and this compriſes in it theſe ſix Things;

1. A total Freedom from the *Dominion of Sin*, from its abſolute Power and Command over us. It will not let Vice ſet up its Throne in our Hearts; it will not ſuffer it to reign and rule there. Integrity is inconſiſtent with a Delight and Complacency in Sin, and with the Habit and Cuſtom of it. That Man hath ſunk himſelf very deep into Impurity and Pollution, who finds theſe prevailing in him.

2. Chriſtian Purity conſiſts in a ſincere Endeavour of keeping ourſelves pure from the Defilements of groſſer Sins. Therefore the Connection of thoſe Words is obſervable, *Pſ.* xix. 13. *Keep back thy Servant from preſumptuous Sins, let them not have Dominion over me: Then ſhall I be upright, and I ſhall be innocent from the great Tranſgreſſion.* It is Part of the Character of an *upright* Man, that he keeps himſelf free from enormous and flagitious Crimes, and ſuch as lay waſte the Conſcience. The greater and more heinous the Sin is, the greater is its Defilement, and therefore it is inconſiſtent with that *Purity* I'm ſpeaking of. And conſequently,

3. THIS Evangelical Purity is an abſtaining from thoſe Sins which more than ordinarily defile a Man. Such are unclean and laſcivious Thoughts, lewd and carnal Deſires, fleſhly Luſts, and Practices ſuitable to them. Theſe are diametrically oppoſite to that Purity which Chriſt commands; and who knows but that he propounds this *Beatitude* here, in Oppoſition to the corrupt Notions and filthy Uſages of the *Pagans* and *Jews*, who both allow'd of groſs Impurities? It is well known to thoſe that have read the Cuſtoms of the *former*, that their Worſhip, in ſome Circumſtances, was obſcene; ſeveral of their Ceremonies were immodeſt, and betray'd a lewd and foul Spirit. And as for the *latter*, it is plain from our Saviour's reproving them, that they were very looſe in their Gloſſes and Comments which they made on that Commandment which forbids Adultery. The Chriſtian Religion alone is void of all carnal Impurity; it checks the leaſt Follies of unclean Thoughts, and it forbids even ocular Adultery. Again, Drunkenneſs and Luxury do wonderfully immerſe the Soul into Impurity, they even choak and ſtifle the Mind. Accordingly one of the Fathers of the Church underſtands by the *Pure in Heart* in the Text, † *ſober and temperate Perſons.* Purity is a Moderation of all the Delights and Pleaſures of the Body, which are wont to debauch and pollute the Mind; it keeps a Man unſpotted from worldly and ſenſual Defilements.

4. GOSPEL-PURITY obliges us not to indulge any *ſecret Sin.* This is one main Thing wherein it oppoſes *Hypocriſy*, and therefore is an inſeparable Attendant of *Sincerity.* The Prayer of the upright Man is that of the Pſalmiſt, *Cleanſe thou me from ſecret Faults*, Pſal. xix. 12. Suffer me not to harbour any unſeen Corruption in my Heart; let me not mock thy divine Majeſty, who ſeeſt all Things, by keeping any inward Reſerves of Sin in my Breaſt.

5. SINCERITY obliges us to guard ourſelves, eſpecially from thoſe vicious Inclinations and Practices which we know we have the greateſt Propenſity to. *I was upright*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, and, as a Proof of it, he adds, *I kept myſelf from mine Iniquity*; from that peculiar Sin which I was moſt addicted to. The mortifying and ſubduing of this is a manifeſt Sign of our Hatred of all Sin, and our entire Love of God. For as God himſelf was pleas'd to ſay to *Abraham*, *Now I know thou loveſt me, becauſe thou haſt not ſpared thy own Son, but offer'd him up*; ſo in a like Manner we may ſuppoſe God to ſpeak to us, Now I know that thou beareſt an entire Affection to me, becauſe thou ſpareſt not thy moſt beloved Luſt, thy moſt moſt delightful Sin; even *that* thou ſacrificeſt unto me. Now,

* Ἅπλωσον ἑαυτόν. Antonin.

† Τοὺς ἐν σοφροσύνῃ διάγοντας. Chryſoſt.

Now, it will not be deny'd by any one, I believe, that this entire Love and ardent Zeal to God is an apparent Indication of Uprightneſs and Sincerity, and lets us know that the Perſon is heartily devoted to God and Religion. Beſides, this argues a great *Self-denial*, which is never ſeparated from *Sincerity.* That is the trueſt Touchſtone of *Self-denial*, when a Man relinquiſhes his moſt delightful Sin, which may juſtly be call'd *himſelf*, and this is ever join'd with an upright and pure Intention. But you will ſay, perhaps, Self-denial is not always accompanied with this; for a Man may for a Time, and for ſiniſter Purpoſes, lay aſide the Practice of the moſt delightful Sin, with a Deſign to take it up again afterwards. To which I anſwer, This is but a counterfeit Self-denial, a mere Shew, a Shadow of it, and therefore this is not to be mention'd here. But if you ſpeak not of a mock Self-denial, but a true and real one, it cannot but be granted that this and Sincerity are ever in Conjunction. If a Man denies himſelf, (as he truly doth that quits his moſt intimate Luſt) he cannot have a better Evidence of his Deſire and Endeavour to ſerve God in Sincerity of Heart.

6. A keeping ourſelves pure from the Contamination of *all Sin*, ſo far as our lapſed Nature and humane Frailty will permit us, is another Branch of this Purity and Sincerity. We muſt ſtrive as much as poſſible to extirpate every Root of Bitterneſs, to ſubdue every vicious Appetite, and to walk circumſpectly and exactly. A ſincere Man condemns Sin in himſelf firſt, before he takes Notice of it in others: He bears the Shock himſelf, before he falls fiercely on his Brethren. This is an infallible Note of Impartiality, and conſequently of Sincerity. This alſo is ſeen not only in ſhunning the actual Commiſſion of Sin, but in labouring to prevent or ſuppreſs the firſt Motions and Riſings of it; in carefully avoiding the very Occaſions of Sin, and in not countenancing the leaſt Degrees of it, and Tendencies to it. He that is ſincere, as he flatters not others, ſo himſelf much leſs; and, as an Evidence of this, he rifles his Conſcience, and takes great Pains to find out whatever is amiſs in him. To comprehend all in ſhort, we cannot poſſibly aſſure ourſelves that we are Maſters of Evangelical Purity, unleſs our Conſciences bear us Witneſs that we ſtrive to extirpate every vicious Thing in us; for where there is a real Purity of Soul, it diſcovers itſelf in diſliking the whole *Genus* of Vice. And this muſt needs be ſo, till it can be prov'd that there is any Sin that is not impure and defiling.

7. NOT only a renouncing of all Vice, but a ſedulous applying ourſelves to the Practice of all Duties, is the Attendant of this Purity I am diſcourſing of. In a ſincere Man we may obſerve an Equality of Carriage at all Times. He is not like ſome *cloiſter'd* Men, who live not always, but only certain Hours, regularly. The Reaſon is plain, for Sincerity teaches to love and and practiſe Holineſs for itſelf, and becauſe of its intrinſick Goodneſs and Excellency. Now, ſeeing theſe never vary, ſo neither can a ſincere Perſon, but at all Times he makes Conſcience of doing his Duty: He is ever the ſame, becauſe his Practice is founded on the ſame indelible Principles, which admit of no Alteration. And for this Reaſon alſo *he hath Reſpect unto all the Commandments*; he aſpires after complete Sanctity, he is very ſollicitous that Love and Humility, and Temperance, and Patience, and all other Graces have their perfect Work, that all the Powers and Faculties of his Soul be kept in an exact Tendency to their right Objects, that he ſerves God with all his Might, that he yield univerſal Obedience to the divine Commands. Sincerity puts a Man upon private as well as publick Duties. *I will walk in my Houſe with a perfect Heart*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *Pſ.* ci. 2. Religion muſt be maintain'd by him at Home, as well as Abroad. And as he practiſes Holineſs within his own Walls, ſo he doth it more privately in his Cloſet. Our Saviour therefore, warning his Diſciples to take care of their right Performance of the Duties of Chriſtianity, preſcribes this as a Teſt of their Sincerity, to make Conſcience of *praying in ſecret*, Mat. vi. 5, *6*. Again, the ſincere Perſon intereſts himſelf not only in the eaſier and cheaper Parts of Religion, but in thoſe that are hard and painful, dear and coſtly. Further, as he neglects not the circumſtantial and accidental Parts of Religion, ſo his greateſt Care and Zeal are employ'd about the Subſtance of it; he is *moſt* obſervant of the great and indiſpenſable Things belonging to it. Here he ſpends his

Thoughts,

Thoughts, hither he directs his Deſigns; and in Purſuance of this, he lays out his moſt exquiſite Pains and Endeavours. Moreover, he that is ſincere, as he omits not the outward Worſhip of God, ſo he is moſt intent on that inward Service of the Heart which is to be paid to him. Tho' he takes care to ſerve God with his Body, and by fit external Expreſſions ſhews his Reverence, yet he is moſt ſollicitous to offer up his Soul to him; and in all the external Offices of Religion, he is careful that his Heart be not wanting. Sincerity makes Men equal and uniform in their Religion, and ſuffers them not to chooſe out ſome Precepts and Laws, and to lay aſide the reſt. She, that was for *dividing the Child*, was not the true Mother of it, nor had ſhe a real Kindneſs for it. In like manner, we are not true and hearty Lovers of Goodneſs, unleſs we have an Affection and Regard to the whole Kind. No Diviſion or Separation is to be permitted here. The Reaſon is plain, becauſe Religion is all of a Piece, and equally good and lovely, and therefore we muſt approve of it in all its ſeveral Exertments.

Laſtly, To complete the Character of the *Chriſtian Sincerity*, it hath nothing falſe and counterfeit in it. Whether it reſpects God or Man, it is an unfeign'd Purpoſe and Endeavour of being truly and really religious. Sincerity makes a firm Marriage between Heart and Lips, and between Words and Deeds. An upright Chriſtian takes care that his Speech be the Copy of his Thoughts, and that his Actions keep Pace with both. He *profeſſes* Love and good Will to others, and at the ſame Time he really *intends* it; and, if he be not hindred by Violence, fails not to *execute* and *perform* it. He dares not mock the Almighty by giving him Lip-ſervice, whilſt his Mind and inward Man are otherwiſe employ'd. He not only acknowledges his Sins before God, and profeſſes his Purpoſes to leave them, but he heartily abhors thoſe Sins which he confeſſes, and actually relinquiſhes them. He endeavours that his Life may be anſwerable to his Profeſſion: And whilſt he ſpeaks of God and of Heaven, he ſtrives to attain to this latter, by obeying the former. He would not be reckon'd holy and religious by his telling the World, in a buſy Oſtentation, that he is ſo. He would not have his Words, but his Life and Practice proclaim him to be good. His deep Streams run without Noiſe, whilſt the ſhallow *Hypocrite* vaunts how religious he is.

And ſo I come in the third Place to give an Account of this excellent Grace by ſetting before you its grand *Oppoſite*, namely *Hypocriſy*. If Sincerity be Purity of Heart, then Hypocriſy is its Impurity. Which ſeems to be hinted in the *Hebrew* Language, wherein the ſame * Word ſignifies *to diſſemble* and *to be impure* or *polluted*. But 'tis plainly expreſs'd *Jam.* iv. 8. where *the double-minded* (that is, Hypocrites) are enjoin'd to *purify their Hearts*, becauſe Purity of Heart, which is the Reverſe of Hypocriſy, and contrary to it, is wanting in ſuch Perſons. This is plain from another Paſſage in this Apoſtle, Chap. 3. *v.* 17. *The Wiſdom that is from above is Pure*, and ſoon after 'tis added, *without Hypocriſy*. This alſo appears from the Conjunction of a *pure Heart* and *Faith unfeigned*, or *without Hypocriſy*, as 'tis in the Original, 1 *Tim.* i. 5, and *purified Souls* and *Love unfeigned*, or *withont Hypocriſy*, 1 Pet. i. 22. But this *Oppoſition* of *Purity* and Hypocriſy will moſt evidently appear from the Character which I ſhall give of this latter (as before I deſcribed to you the former). As to the general Nature of it, the true Notion of it is this, that it's a Pretence of Piety, a ſeeming Holineſs, a Counterfeiting of Religion. A Hypocrite is a Diſſembler, one that deſires to be thought what he is not. This is ſignified in his very *Name*, which denotes an *Actor in a Play*; Now, 'tis known that ſuch a one acts a King, but is indeed a mean Perſon: Yea, the whole Buſineſs of the Stage is feign'd and counterfeit: Whatever is repreſented there, is in Diſguiſe. So a Hypocrite on the Stage of this World doth but act a Part: He repreſents a religious Man, but is no ſuch thing: He makes a Shew of Virtue, but hath none.

* Chanaph.

But to give you a more particular and diſtinct Account of him, take it in theſe four Things, 1. The Words, Thoughts, Contrivances, and Actions of an Hypocrite have no Correſpondence which one another. 2. He is one that is always partial in his Obſervance of the divine Laws, and ſhews his Diſlike of Univerſal Obedience. 3. Whatever he doth in Religion is for falſe Ends, and on ſiniſter Reſpects. 4. He is unſtable in all his Ways.

Firſt, A Hypocrite's Words, Thoughts and Actions have *no Correſpondence* with one another, and that whether you conſider them as to *God*, or as to *Man*. His Words directed unto God have no Affinity with his Thoughts: He confeſſes his Sins before God, and profeſſes that he is griev'd for them, and that he purpoſes to abandon them, but at the ſame Time he intends no ſuch Thing, yea, very frequently he minds not the Words which he utters. He approaches to God with his outward Man, whilſt his inward Thoughts are otherwiſe fix'd. This was one great Specimen of the *Phariſees* Hypocriſy, as appears from our Saviour's applying to them that Expoſtulation in *Iſai.* xxix. 13. *This People honour me with their Lips, but their Heart is far from me.* Matt. vii. 6. And as the Hearts and Mouths of Hypocrites are Strangers to one another, ſo their Words and Actions do not agree. They make Confeſſion of their Sins, and promiſe to reform, but they continue in the ſame Courſe of Life, and make Additions every Day to their former Guilt; as if it were ſufficient to acknowledge their Miſcarriages without forſaking them. This is the Hypocriſy of their *Prayers*. And that of their *Diſcourſes* is not much unlike it. They talk of Converſion and Regeneration, of Faith and Repentance, and of the Joys of Heaven, but they act not proportionably to what they ſpeak of; they take no Pains to make ſure of thoſe heavenly Joys; for they are not ſtudious to practiſe thoſe Graces and Duties which can only bring them to the Fruition of them. It was reckon'd a groſs Abſurdity in that Actor who cried, *O Heaven!* and pointed with his Finger to the *Earth:* But this Soleciſm is too uſual and common in the Lives of Men, for they talk of heavenly Bliſs, and pretend to come thither; but all their Actions and Deſigns tend towards the Earth, and are terminated wholly on the Things of this World.

THERE is yet a groſſer Sort of Hypocriſy towards God; and that is, when Men make Religion a Pretext for Vice, and a Cloak to hide their wicked Projects. *Herod*, whom our Saviour calls a *Fox*, becauſe of his Diſſembling and Subtlety, pretended he would worſhip Chriſt, when his Deſign was to murder the innocent Babe. He would be thought to be religious and devout, that he might thereby diſguiſe his bloody Contrivance, and render his horrid Attempts more ſucceſsful. *In the Name of God*, is the Preface to moſt of the Chapters in the Alcoran. This hath been, and is ſtill too common a Mocking of God; Men gild and varniſh over their corrupt Deſigns with fair Flouriſhes of Piety. They make Religion truckle to their baſe Ends; and when they are ſeeking themſelves and their own Advantage, they make as if God's Glory were their Deſign.

BUT as there is a Diſſembling towards *God*, ſo there is one likewiſe towards *Men*. And here alſo the Hypocrite's Tongue diſagrees with his Thoughts and Deeds. Sometimes you ſhall hear him vaunt of thoſe Endowments and Excellencies which he knows he is not Poſſeſſor of, but thinks to deceive others into a good Opinion of him by theſe high Pretences. No meaner a Writer than *Plutarch* tells us, that the Philoſophers, whilſt they ſeem'd to fly from Glory, moſt of all courted it. When they affected to live ingloriouſly and obſcurely, they were very deſirous to be known and applauded. And the like Hypocriſy is too frequently obſervable among ſome that profeſs Chriſtianity. At another Time the Complaints of *Diſſemblers* are loud concerning Grievances and Burdens, which they do not ſo much as touch with one of their Fingers. They have the Way of ſome Beggars, to make counterfeit Sores, to pretend a Malady or Oppreſſure, that they may gain Compaſſion, and thereby effect ſome Deſign they have.

BUT the Main of their diſſembling towards Men lies in their flattering them, and pretending Kindneſs and Friendſhip, when their real Intention is to do them a Miſchief. *They ſpeak Vanity every one with his Neighbour, with flattering Lips, and with a double Heart do they ſpeak*, as the Pſalmiſt deſcribes them, *Pſ.* xii. 2. And they act this Part moſt, when the Perſon they ſpeak to is to be ruined by them. A right Hypocrite cries, *Hail Maſter*, when he intends to *betray* and *crucify*. A Compliment makes Way for an Aſſaſſination. A fair Flouriſh of empty Words hides the Defect of true Kindneſs and Friendſhip, yea, and diſguiſes the blackeſt and fouleſt Contrivances. An Hypocrite carries Peace in his outward Deportment, but foſters Enmity in the inmoſt Receſſes of his Heart. The Pſalmiſt gives this ſhort Character of him, *Pſ.* lv. 21. The Words of his *Mouth are ſmoother than Butter, but War is in his Heart*; *his Words are ſofter than Oil, yet are they drawn Swords.* This Oil doth but keep theſe Weapons from ruſting, that they may the more eaſily ſlaughter. The Emperor *Domitian* was a right Hypocrite in this, for we are told, that he ſpoke faireſt to thoſe on whom he intended to wreck his Revenge, and whoſe Lives he had purpoſed to take away.

I might add, that there is Hypocriſy in *Looks*, which our Saviour takes Notice of in *Matt.* vi. 16. and *Luke* xiv. 17. and would not have his Diſciples to be of a *ſad Countenance*, and therein imitate *Hypocrites*, who *disfigure their Faces*, and affect Sowreneſs of Looks, to be thought by thoſe that behold them to be very demure, ſerious and pious.

119.6

Secondly, AN Hypocrite is one that is always *partial* in his Obſervance of God's Laws, and ſhews his Diſlike of univerſal Obedience. He refuſes to do the Whole that is enjoin'd him, and contents himſelf with doing as much as he thinks fit. He is obſervant of ſome one Commandment, and diſregards the reſt: He ſeems to be ſtrict in ſome Duties, whilſt he takes no notice of others which are important and neceſſary: He extols ſome Virtues, but deſpiſes and vilifies others. Some are chaſte and continent, but their Practice tells us, that they think Covetouſneſs is no Sin. Others are free from Covetouſneſs, but they foſter Pride and Self-Conceit. Some are very humble, but Luſt and Uncleanneſs are reckon'd no Vices with them. There are thoſe that will not uſe any vain Oaths, but they boggle not at Lying and Cheating. Others are never obſerv'd to cheat and defraud; but they make no Conſcience of ſhunning the Sins of Luxury and Drunkenneſs. Others are never drunk with Wine and other ſtrong Drink, but they are intoxicated with Paſſion, and this they account no Crime. Again, others ſhew no Signs of extraordinary Paſſion, but they inwardly burn with Spite and Malice, and Revenge againſt their Brethren. *Laſtly*, Many Men ſeem to be ſtrict Obſervers of Juſtice and Honeſty towards Men, but they fail in Devotion and Piety towards God. And ſo on the contrary, there are many that duly perform thoſe religious Exerciſes and Duties which have immediate Reſpect to God, but they ſhamefully neglect the Duties of common Honeſty which concern their Neighbours. Thus *Simeon* and *Levi* could by no Means marry their Siſter to an uncircumciſed Man, but they could treacherouſly and inhumanely murder the Men of *Sichem*. *Jephtha* was very exact and ſevere in obſerving his Vow, his raſh Vow, but he made no Conſcience of the Sin of Murder, that is, of taking his Daughter's Life away. Some of the *Jews* in our Saviour's Time, under the Pretence of honouring God, ſlighted and deſpis'd their Parents, as *Origen* interprets that Place, *Matt.* xv. 5, 6. *Whoſoever ſhall ſay to his Father or Mother, It is a Gift by whatſoever thou mighteſt be profited by me, and honour not his Father or his Mother, he ſhall be free.* Which refers to a known * Form of Vowing among the *Jews*, which ran in thoſe very Terms here mention'd: They pretended, that if they had caſt in a Gift into the Corban, towards repairing the Temple, they were excuſed from all Acts of Kindneſs and Charity towards their Parents when they were reduced to Poverty. *Judas* pretended to great Piety and Charity, when he would have the Price of the Ointment given to the Poor, but he had no Senſe of the Treachery and Cruelty he ſhew'd towards his Maſter. The Prieſts would not enter into the common Hall juſt before the Time of the Paſſover, leſt they ſhould be defiled; and they refuſed to put *Judas*'s Money into the Corban, becauſe it was the Price of Blood, it would pollute the Church-Treaſury: But they made nothing of polluting their Conſciences with the Blood of the Lamb of God.

THERE is Hypocriſy in all this. Men think to quit Scores with God, to compound for ſome Sins by other Virtues, when indeed they are but counterfeit Virtues; for this Partiality and Unevenneſs in Religion is an Argument of a falſe Heart; eſpecially if a Man ſeems to be a ſtrict Obſerver of the Duties of the Firſt Table, and yet hath no Regard to thoſe of the Second, it is not to to be doubted but that he is a groſs Diſſembler. And ſo likewiſe if a Man be defective in the Duties of natural Religion, he is no true Chriſtian. He, that

* In *Miſhnab. Tractat. Nedarim.*

is careleſs of his Morality, may be concluded to be an Hypocrite in Chriſtianity. For Morality is the Baſis of Chriſtianity: Chriſtian Graces are founded on moral Virtues: Therefore * one ſmartly ſaith, *Talk of Chriſtians! Get to be Heathens firſt.* You muſt firſt practiſe the Duties of common Honeſty, before you can pretend to be Chriſtians. He is the ſound and ſincere Man, whoſe Religion is even and uniform, who indifferently practiſes all Virtues, Graces, and Duties, which are enjoined him. Sincerity produces an equal Tenour and Courſe of Religion in our Lives; but Hypocriſy is unequal and partial; it puts Men on to obſerve ſome Parts of Religion, but allows them to live in Neglect of the other.

MORE particularly, to ſhew the Hypocrite's *Partiality*, I will inſtance in theſe five Things.

1. AN Hypocrite performs the *Outward* Acts of Religion, but is not concerned for the *Inward* ones. The Religion of an Hypocrite may be ſolved by Matter and Motion. He hath no inward Principle; all that he doth is by Mechanical Operation. I obſerved before, that he borrowed his Name from the *Stage*, where all is but an *Outward Shew*. He is not inwardly affected with the Part he acts. His Religion hath ſomething of the *Tongue* in it, which makes him loud and talkative: It hath ſomething of the *Knee*, which makes him compliment with Heaven; ſomething of the *Eye*, which is caſt up with a ſeeming Zeal; ſomething of the *Ear*, which cauſes him to wait ſometimes at Wiſdom's Gates: But after all it may be pronounced of him as of *Simon* the Sorcerer, *His Heart is not right in the Sight of God.* Acts viii. 21. Our Saviour uſes a very ſignificant and appoſite Similitude, to ſet forth the Nature of this firſt Branch of the Character of Hypocrites, *They are* (ſaith he) *like unto whited Sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead Mens Bones, and of all Uncleanneſs: Even ſo ye alſo outwardly appear righteous unto Men, but within ye are full of Hypocriſy and Iniquity.* Mat. xxiii. 27. Thus he moſt fitly ſets forth that loathed Sin which thoſe Men were ſo guilty of. They were outwardly *White*, they had a Shew of Innocence and Purity, but under this lurked a falſe Heart, and impure and black Deſigns. Though they were outwardly painted and garniſh'd, yet within there was nothing but Stench and Rottenneſs, Filth, and Corruption. Thence it was, that this Phariſaic and Hypocritical Sanctity was ſo *odious* unto God, the Searcher of Hearts, who is delighted only with unfeigned Holineſs. It was the Defect of this that render'd the Sacrifices and other Services of thoſe Perſons unacceptable, nay abominable. And indeed all that theſe Men did was mere outward Shew, that others who ſaw them might have a good Opinion of them.

THERE was a Sort of *Phariſees*, mention'd in the *Talmud*, who went as if they had ſtump Feet; they were ſcarce ſeen to lift up their Feet in their Going, that it might be believed that they were given to Thoughtfulneſs and Meditation. Some of them wore a Kind of Mortar Hats, heavy and deep, that they might be forced to look downwards: And ſome would have broad Brims, that they might not gaze and look about them, but fix their Eye on the Ground, to gain thereby the Eſteem of being Perſons of very great Serioufneſs; whereas it was all but mere Shew and Pageantry. So in the *Popiſh* Religion there is a great deal of outward and viſible Devotion, but generally the mental Part is wanting; witneſs their Service in an unknown Tongue; they pray, but underſtand not the Words they ſpeak. If the Beads do but knack orderly, and keep juſt Reckoning, the Heart may wander, and not be concerned in the religious Offices. Theſe are of the Number of thoſe Perſons the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, who *have a Form of Godlineſs, but deny the Power thereof.* They content themſelves with the Bark, the Shell, the Surface, the Shadow of Religion, but are Strangers to the inward Life of it.

2. THE Hypocrite buſies himſelf about the *Leſſer* Matters of Religion, but minds not thoſe that are moſt *Weighty*. His Religion conſiſts moſt in ceremonial Obſervances, and he takes no Care about the great Eſſentials and Vitals of Chriſtianity. Thoſe generally devour theſe: For it is in Religion as in civil Converſe; obſerve it, and you will find it true, that thoſe, who are true-hearted and ſincere, affect not Courtſhip and Compliments; but they that addict themſelves

* Mr. Gre- gory.

ſelves to this Practice are generally falſe-hearted. All the Zeal of an Hypocrite is ſpent upon a Ceremony, a Circumſtance, an indifferent Thing; ſo that he hath none left to ſhew againſt a known Sin or Vice. Such a Kind of Religion was that of the *Phariſees*, which was buſied about ſome empty Obſervances, ſome trivial Rites, but in the mean Time had no Regard to moral and indiſpenſable Duties. *They made broad their Phylacteries, and enlarged the Borders of their Garments.* Mat. xxiii. 5. Their Garbs ſavour'd more of Religion than their Minds. With no little Oſtentation they wore their Scrolls of Parchment, which were Tranſcripts of ſome Part of the Law, but they were wholly neglectful of having the Law written on their Hearts. Our Saviour goes on ſtill to lay open to the World the Hypocriſy of this Sort of Men, in the 25th and 26th Verſes of the forenamed Chapter, where he upbraids them with their mean and trifling Religion, which was ſo ſollicitous about *Diſhes* and *Platters*, and other ceremonious *Waſhings*, and in the mean Time neglected the Purifying and Cleanſing of the Heart and Life.

3. An Hypocrite ſhews his Partiality in chooſing out ſuch Duties as are moſt *eaſy*, but leaves the *difficult* ones to be performed by others. Some Mens Religion is ſpent chiefly in the Obſerving thoſe Laws which are attended with no Pains and Labour, with no Hardſhips and Reluctancies; as for Example, repairing to the Place of publick Worſhip, and behaving themſelves decently there, and performing the common Acts of Civility and Honeſty towards their Neighbours. It was one of *Numa*'s abſtruſe Precepts, * *Uſe a circular Motion in the Worſhip of the Gods.* Theſe Men do ſo indeed; they tread in a Circle, they keep a Round of Duties, which are eaſy and common, which are not laborious and painful; but where great Care and Circumſpection are required, they deſire to be excuſed, and the difficult Parts of Chriſtianity are abhorred by them, as Self-Denial and Mortification, and Care of their Thoughts, truſting in God in Times of the greateſt Danger, a careful Avoiding of Temptations, Patience and Submiſſion under the ſharpeſt Trials, ſtrict and circumſpect Walking in the whole Courſe of their Lives. Theſe they are Strangers to, theſe are none of their Concern.

4. An Hypocrite abſtains from groſs Sins, but makes no Conſcience of leſſer ones. He makes it his chief Care to refrain from open, ſcandalous, and notorious Enormities, as palpable Lying, Stealing, Extortion, Swearing and Curſing, exceſſive Drinking, Whoredom, Murder, and the like. But it troubles him not if he be guilty of ſmaller Delinquencies, and if he indulge himſelf in thoſe Practices which are not commonly branded by the World.

5. At other Times the Hypocrite acts in a quite contrary Way, (for he is one that appears in *all Sorts of Shapes*) he is obſerved to be very punctual in ſome ſmaller Matters of Morality, but gives himſelf Liberty in *greater*. Thus the *Phariſees* of old were very preciſe in leſſer Duties, but freely tranſgreſs'd in others of a higher Nature. He that was Truth itſelf charged them with this, that *they ſtrain'd at a Gnat, but ſwallow'd a Camel.* Mat. xxiii. 24. Which Way of Expreſſion, uſed here by our Saviour, is grounded on the Cuſtom of the preciſer Sort of *Jews*, who ſtrained all their Wine, leſt they ſhould unawares ſwallow a Gnat, or any other ſuch little Animal, forbidden by the Law. So the *Phariſees* pretended great Exactneſs with reſpect to ſome little Treſpaſſes, but they were not ſhy of offending even in ſome very groſs Matters. This latter our Saviour calls *ſwallowing a Camel*, a Committing of Sins, tho' never ſo great and heinous.

6. The Hypocrite ſhews himſelf partial in this, that he favours and flatters *himſelf*, but preſſes *other Mens* Sins very home upon them: His greateſt Employment is Abroad; he buſies himſelf with other Mens Lives and Manners, but calls not himſelf to account; he pries not into his own Heart and Life. He follows the Steps of his Brother-Hypocrite, the *Phariſee*, who *juſtified himſelf, and thanked God that he was not like other Men.* He excuſes and palliates his own Actions, but aggravates thoſe of others, and renders them even worſe than they are. This argues the Man to be *partial*, and therefore *hypocritical:* For that is the general Head I have here inſiſted upon, That an Hypocrite is *partial* in his Obedience, and hates an univerſal Conformity to God's Laws.

Thirdly,

* *Plutarch* in vit. Numæ.

Thirdly, AN Hypocrite is one that acts in Religion for falſe Ends, and on ſiniſter Reſpects. *Have ye faſted at all unto me?* ſaid God to the Jews, charging them with this, that they faſted not to God, but to themſelves; that is, with Reſpect wholly to themſelves: and ſo, as to other Duties and Performances done by Hypocrites, the Blemiſh of them is, that they are not done to God, but to themſelves. Which I explain in theſe following Particulars. 1. An Hypocrite makes a Profeſſion of Religion, and doth ſomething in it to *pacify his Conſcience*: For it is unqueſtionable Truth, that there is a Religion that is natural; and therefore Men, from the innate Dictates of their Minds, muſt have ſome of it. This is neceſſary in Order to their Quiet; for natural Conſcience will torment them, if they are wholly unmindful of this. So that ſome Perſons make a Shew of Religion, that their Minds may not be uneaſy, and that they may be free from the Gripes of Conſcience. 2. It is the *Faſhion* to be of ſome Religion, and therefore the Hypocrite thinks fit to be of one. It is a *Cuſtom* which generally prevails in the Country he lives in, and he is reſolv'd he will not be ſingular: He does not care to go againſt the Mode and Uſage of the Times, and hence he eſpouſes ſome religious Party. 3. An Hypocrite generally takes up Religion for *worldly Profit*. If it be gainful, as well as faſhionable, 'tis ſo much the better, ſaith he. Thus the diſſembling *Phariſee* deſign'd the *devouring Widows Houſes*; that is, making himſelf rich by the Miſeries of others, when he ſeem'd to be very devout at his Prayers. And this is the Guiſe of other Hypocrites; they turn Devotion into Intereſt, they make Religion a Revenue, they counterfeit Godlineſs, becauſe 'tis attended with ſome worldly Advantage.

AGAIN: The Hypocrite's Religion is for *Reputation*, as well as Profit. *Jehu*'s Sword had two Edges; it cut one Way for God, and another for himſelf: He ſlew the Worſhippers of *Baal*, but ſought his own Glory. And ſo in too frequent Inſtances it appears, that Religion is made only a Tool by ſome Men, to work their own Deſigns, and particularly, that of being taken Notice of and eſteem'd. Accordingly, our Saviour tells us, that it is the Guiſe of Hypocrites to *ſound a Trumpet before them in the Synagogues and in the Streets, that they might have Glory of Men*, *Matt.* vi. 2. and *to ſtand praying in the Corners of the Streets, that they may be ſeen of Men*, ver. 5. They put on this Shew of Devotion, only to get Applauſe, and to have the Name of great Zealots. Thus even among Chriſtians, a Deſire of Vain-glory makes many of them ſeem devout and holy; and they appear to be religious, becauſe it is creditable and honourable to be ſuch. An Hypocrite is an *Actor* on the Theatre: This Sort of Men look for *Spectators*. If they were abandon'd of theſe, or of their Applauſe, they would ſoon quit the Employment. An Hypocrite would not pray, or faſt, or give Alms, or do any other Act of Religion, if he thought it would not be known: This makes him much more concern'd for publick than for private Exerciſes of Religion: This makes him more forward to perform Duties in the Sight of Man than in Secret: This makes him very active in the one, but very ſlow and ſluggiſh in the other. Thus I have briefly ſhew'd, that the Hypocrite makes Religion ſtoop and truckle to ſelfiſh and worldly Deſigns, and ſtrike ſail to his own private Ends.

Fourthly, TO compriſe all that hath or can be ſaid of the Hypocrite, I add the Character that St. *James* gives of a *double-minded Man*; that is, a Hypocrite, *that he is unſtable in all his Ways*, *Jam.* i. 8. He ſhifts Faces as duly as the Moon; he tacks about with the Winds thro' all the Points of the Compaſs. This is one inſeparable Mark of an Hypocrite. Such were ſome of the old *Iſraelites*, as they are deſcrib'd by the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* lxxviii. 8, 9. *Their Spirit was not ſtedfaſt with God; they turned back and dealt unfaithfully; they were turned aſide like a broken Bow.* And again, *ver.* 37. *Their Heart was not right with God, neither were they ſtedfaſt in his Covenant.* The latter was the Conſequent of the former, and flow'd from it by natural Cauſality. *Their Heart being not right*, which is the very Deſcription of an Hypocrite, 'tis no Wonder, that they were not *ſtedfaſt*. Thus, in our Saviour's Parable of the Sower, is the *ſtony Ground*, or *he that received the Seed into ſtony Places: He hath not Root in himſelf, but dureth for a While; for when Tribulation and Perſecution ariſe, he is offended*, *ed*, Matt. xiii. 20, 21. As he took up Religion for ſecular Intereſts, ſo he is ready to lay it down on the ſame Account. This is the Nature of the unſtable Hypocrite. This Muſhroom hath no Root, therefore 'tis ſoon pull'd up. This Meteor hath no Conſiſtency, and ſo 'tis no Marvel that it quickly drops down. When the Foundation is unſound, you may expect that the Structure (as goodly as it ſeems to be) will ſink in a ſhort Time. It is certain, that Hypocriſy and Diſſimulation are no Baſis for Religion to be built upon. Theſe painted Sepulchres will not uphold, but rather entomb all Virtue and Piety. But, on the contrary, Stedfaſtneſs in Religion is the happy Iſſue of Sincerity. It is this that makes Religion laſting and durable: It cauſes its Followers to perſevere, and is the beſt Antidote againſt Apoſtacy. Thus I have finiſh'd the firſt Thing I undertook, which was to explain the *Nature* of *Purity* of *Heart*, or *Sincerity*, which I have done, not only by ſetting before you the abſtracted Nature of it, but by preſenting you with its *Oppoſite*, namely, Hypocriſy.

THE ſecond Thing to be done, is to *perſuade* to the Practice of this Evangelical Grace; where, firſt, I ſhall propound ſome *Conſiderations* to excite to the Performance of this Grace, and to *diſſuade* from the Contrary: And, ſecondly, I ſhall preſcribe the Way and Method of attaining it. The Conſiderations which may excite us to the Exerting of this Grace are ſuch as theſe,

1. IT is moſt ſuitable to the Nature of God, who is a *Spirit*, and therefore *they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in Spirit and in Truth*, John iv. 24. that is, with a pure and ſincere Heart. It is our Religion and our Honour to be like God; and, conſequently, if Purity be an Excellency and Perfection in him, it muſt needs be ſo in us. The Heathen Poets ſometimes repreſented their Gods as guilty of Hypocriſy and Diſſimulation as well as of other Vices: So that 'tis no Wonder, that many of the *Pagans* practis'd the ſame in their own Lives; for who would expect they ſhould be better than their Gods? But we, who are bleſs'd with right Notions of the true God, and are aſſured of his unſtained Purity, ought ſeriouſly to meditate on it, and thence be ſtirr'd up to imitate (according to our Meaſure) this Perfection of the Deity.

2. WE ſhould conſider, that Purity of Heart is the main Thing which God requires, and the principal Thing which he accepts; and, on that Account, we ſhould be very deſirous to arrive to it. *Thou deſireſt Truth in the inward Parts*, ſaid that godly Penitent, *Pſal.* li. 6. And again, *ver.* 16, 17. *The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit*; *a broken and a contrite Heart* (the ſame with *a clean Heart* and *a right Spirit* before-mention'd) *thou wilt not deſpiſe*; yea, thou wilt accept. *My Son, give me thy Heart*, was the divine Counſel, and left us by an inſpired Writer, who knew what Gift was moſt acceptable to God. And this is ſo rational a Thing, that one of the Gentile Moraliſts could dictate thus, * *Things without pleaſe not God*; *give ſomething of thyſelf to him.* What ſhould we be more eager to give, than that which we know will be moſt grateful to the Receiver? Seeing the divine Acceptance is the greateſt Felicity we can wiſh for, let us be encouraged on this Account to the Practice of this Grace.

* Hierocles.

3. Conſider that Purity of Heart is ſo excellent in itſelf, that all other Things in Religion take their Excellency and borrow their Beauty from this. All Actions are ſo far good and laudable, as they proceed from Sincerity of Heart. The Scene of Religion is our better and nobler Part, which thinks and is conſcious of its Actions; therefore this being ſet aright and well-diſpoſed, the external Performances will be regular and orderly. This is the Salt that gives a Savour to all our ſpiritual Sacrifices, and duly qualifies all our Duties and Services. Where Uprightneſs of Heart is found, there the divine Majeſty is pleaſed to connive at many Failings and Imperfections, to paſs by ſundry Errors and Miſcarriages. As *Charity*, ſo *Sincerity* covers a Multitude of Sins.

4. THIS is ever attended with ſolid Peace and Comfort. This emboldens the Servants of God, and enables them to appear with Courage and an undaunted Spirit. Therefore it was the Pſalmiſt's Petition, *O let my Heart be ſound in thy Statutes, that I may not be aſhamed*, Pſal. cxix. 80. Shame is the Effect of Hypocriſy, but Courage and Confidence are the natural Iſſue of Sincerity. Accordingly, obſerve how this good King opened his Breaſt to Heaven, *Pſal.* xxvi. 1, 2. *Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in my Integrity: Examine me, O*

Lord, and prove me; *try my Reins and my Heart.* Which muſt needs be the Language of a Perſon who was ſincere, and true to his Profeſſion; elſe he could never thus have made bare his Soul, and laid it open, and expos'd it to the View of the all-ſeeing God. So true is that of St. *John*, *If our Heart condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God*, 1 John iii. 21. Obſerve what it was that made the Apoſtle and his Brethren ſo joyful in the Midſt of the greateſt Sorrows and Perplexities, 2 *Cor.* i. 12. *Our Rejoycing is this, the Teſtimony of our Conſcience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity we have had our Converſation in the World.* It is this, which, next unto the all-ſufficient Merits of Chriſt, is the only Foundation of true and ſolid Joy. This in all Times of Diſtreſs and Calamity will be our ſtanding Solace and Refreſhment. Let the World go how it will, this will prove a never-failing Spring of Conſolation.

5. And as 'tis thus thro' the whole Courſe of our Lives, ſo it will be much more, when we come to leave the World. There is no ſuch Comfort at Death as Sincerity, as appears in the Inſtance of that King *Hezekiah*: When he received the Sentence of Death from the Prophet's Mouth, this was his Language, *Remember now, O Lord, I beſeech thee, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a perfect*, or *upright Heart*, Iſa. xxxviii. 3. This kept him from ſinking under the diſmal Apprehenſions of Death. This adminiſtred real Comfort to him, when nothing elſe in the World was able to do it. Thus Sincerity will be moſt ſerviceable to us, when we moſt ſtand in Need of Help and Support. When we are bidding Farewel to all the Enjoyments of this Life, and taking Leave of our deareſt Friends and Acquaintance, and no earthly Thing can accompany us in our Paſſage to another World, this will go along with us, and ſtand by us, and befriend us. The Conſideration of this may be a great Inducement to us to ſtrive to be Maſters of this Grace.

Then with Reſpect to *Hypocriſy*, let us conſider theſe two Things; the deteſtable Nature of it, and the miſchievous Effects of it. Firſt, it is *in itſelf deteſtable* and *odious*. Diſſembling in Religion is the vileſt of Cheats. An Ape is the more deform'd and contemptible for being like a Man. Hypocriſy is the more abominable, becauſe it outwardly reſembles Goodneſs. Who cannot but abhor to ſee ſo ſacred a Thing as Religion counterfeited, to ſee it taken up merely for ſiniſter and baſe Ends, and all Religion thereby diſgrac'd and vilify'd? For when Men are obſerv'd to drive a Trade of religious Profeſſion, and then turn Bankrupts, it is concluded, by too many, that there is no Fund or Bottom at all in Religion; that all Perſons who ſeem religious are Cheats, and will at laſt prove ſo. Thus the Way of Godlineſs is Evil ſpoken of, and the Name of God is blaſphemed. Hypocriſy, thus ſtriking at the very Root and Foundation of Religion, it cannot but be hateful to God, and be the proper Object of his Wrath. Thence we may read ſo many *Woes* denounced by our Saviour againſt *Hypocrites*. And to ſhew to the World, in a particular Example, how God deteſts and abhors this Sort of Sinners, he ſmote *Ananias* and *Saphira* with Death, for bringing a Part of their Eſtate, and laying it at the Apoſtles Feet, but hypocritally concealing the reſt. This may juſtly ſtrike Terror into thoſe who deal falſly with God, all Pretenders and Maskers in Religion.

Again, conſider this, that Hypocriſy is not only deteſtable in itſelf, but *miſchievous in its Effects*. It is extremely hurtful to the Mind, becauſe it fills it with Confidence and Preſumption. The Hypocrite acts his Part, and diſſembles ſo long that at laſt he deceives himſelf, and he perſuades himſelf that he is in a very good Condition; as I have heard of ſome Stage-Players that have fancied themſelves to be the very Perſons whoſe Parts they acted. But this Self-deceit wears off at laſt, and then the Hypocrite ſees himſelf in a wretched State. Then that of the Prophet is verified, *Fearfulneſs ſurpriſeth the Hypocrites*, Iſai. xxxiii. 14. even in this Life Hypocriſy is the Parent of Dread and Confuſion; for the Man ſees that he hath deluded himſelf, and thereupon is filled with Terror and Aſtoniſhment. But he hath the worſt Part to act when Death approaches: Then it is moſt true that *the Hypocrites Hope periſhes*, Job. viii. 13. therefore it is ſaid in chap. xxvii. v. 8. *What is the Hope of the Hypocrite, when God taketh away his Soul?* which is more plainly expreſſed in another Place in that Book, *His Hope ſhall be as the giving up of the Ghoſt*, chap. xi. v. 20.

v. 20. when he is dying, his Hope expires alſo. His fond Conceit of Happineſs then leaves him, and Horror and Deſpair are his Paſs-port into another World: And when he comes thither, his Condition is unſpeakably miſerable, for every Hypocrite received all his Reward in this World; as our Saviour ſaith of that Sort of Men, *they have their Reward*, Mat. vi. 5, 16. that is, the Eſteem and Praiſe of Men, which is their only Recompence; but afterwards the extremeſt Miſery ſhall be their Portion, as we cannot but obſerve, that the utmoſt Severity of Puniſhment in Hell is ſaid to be a *Portion with Hypocrites*, Matt. xxiv. 51.

THESE Conſiderations, I hope, have prepared the Way for the next Thing I am to treat of, to wit, the *Means* and *Helps* of attaining this high Accompliſhment of Sincerity or Purity of Heart. That you may effectually do it, I commend theſe plain Directions to you:

1. OFTEN put this Queſtion to yourſelves, Is my Heart ſincere and upright before God? And follow the holy Pſalmiſt's Counſel, *Commune with your own Hearts, and be ſtill*, Pſal. iv. 4. When you are in the moſt quiet and compoſed Temper, make Reſearches into yourſelves, and take a ſtrict Account of your Thoughts and Inclinations, of the Propenſions and Sallies of your Minds. And paſs from your Hearts to your Lives, and there rifle all your Actions and Performances in Religion. To which Purpoſe conſult the ſeveral Particulars of that Character which I gave of Sincerity and Hypocriſy, and examine yourſelves by them.

2. To promote the great Deſign of Purity in your Hearts and Lives, let the Word of God be your daily and conſtant Monitor; be converſant in the Holy Volume, which was given you on purpoſe to promote this Grace. Other Writings uſually favour us in our Follies and Vanities, nay, many of them (too great Numbers in theſe Days) adminiſter directly to the wicked Practices of Men; they excuſe and palliate Vice too often, and ſometimes (which is worſe) defend it. But God's Word is the Fountain of Purity; you may waſh yourſelves and be clean. When God forbad all Mixture of Animals, and Sowing of different Seeds in the Ground, as alſo of Linſy-woolſy Garments, *&c.* this was to diſgrace the Hypocrite and his Actions; this was the Moral of thoſe Obſervances. *Simplicity* and *Sincerity* were myſtically enjoined by thoſe Laws, as *Theodoret* of old, and *Grotius* and *Bochart* of late, have concluded. Conſult theſe Sacred Oracles, and be guided by them, weigh your Hearts in this Balance of the Sanctuary, and thereby come to a Knowledge of yourſelves, be acquainted with your ſpiritual State, and learn to ſerve God in Spirit and in Truth.

3. Wherever thou art, and whatſoever thou art doing, remember that thou art in God's Preſence, who ſearcheth thy Heart, and is acquainted with the darkeſt Corners and the inmoſt Receſſes of it; we may cheat and deceive Men by our outward Pretences and Appearances, but God cannot be deceived, becauſe he is of infinite Knowledge and Penetration. Let us often urge this in our Minds, that *all Things are naked and open to the Eye of him with whom we have to do*, Heb. iv. 12. and let the Conſideration of this prevail with us to be ſincere and upright. Theſe two are joined together by the Apoſtle, 2 Cor. ii. 17. *As of Sincerity, and as in the Sight of God*, to ſuggeſt to us, that Sincerity is attained by ſetting God before our Eyes, and by fixing this on our Thoughts, that we are always in his Preſence, that we are taken Notice of by his All-ſeeing Eye; this will help us to baniſh all Hypocriſy and Diſſimulation.

4. That you may be ſincere, ſet before you Death and Judgment, and the Conſequences of theſe. It is certain that all your ſpecious Colours and Shews will diſappear in the Land of Darkneſs. Souls once ſeparated from the Body are no longer under Diſguiſe, but appear what really they are, eſpecially when the Day of Judgment arrives, they muſt not be in Maſquerade: All Vizors muſt be pluck'd off, all Mens Thoughts, Words, and Actions muſt be laid open, and impartially ſcann'd. As God always ſees our Hearts, ſo they ſhall one Day be diſcovered and diſcloſed unto all the World. What elſe is the Meaning of Chriſt's Caution to his Diſciples in *Luke* xii. 1, 2? *Take Heed*, ſaith he, *of the Leaven of the Phariſees, which is Hypocriſy, for there is nothing covered that ſhall not be revealed, neither hid that ſhall not be known.* As if our Saviour had ſaid, you are unwilling that Men ſhould know what you think and contrive, and what

you do in ſecret, but be it known to you, that all this will be diſcover'd to the World at the great Day of Accounts: Think of it, that you muſt then be ſtripp'd and uncaſed, you muſt appear naked before all Mankind. Let this Conſideration move you to think, ſpeak, and do theſe Things which ye will not be aſhamed of at Dooms-day. That was an excellent Rule given by *Seneca* *, We ought to live and act as if all Men ſaw what we do; we ought ſo to think as if any one had a Caſement into our Breaſts, and beheld our moſt intimate Thoughts. For though they can't do this now, yet nothing is more ſure than that they ſhall afterwards do it; for the very Thoughts of our Hearts ſhall be laid open to the View of all Men, and the general Aſſembly of the World ſhall know what we deſign'd, ſpoke, and acted in private, no Eye ſeeing, or Ear hearing us. Permit me to relate what *Velleius Paterculus* tells us of a noble *Roman*, to whom there came an Artiſt, and wiſhed him to build his Houſe a-new, becauſe it lay too open and expoſed to View, and the Workman aſſured him that he would ſo contrive the next Building that none ſhould be able to ſee what was done there. No, ſaid *Druſus*, (for that was his Name) I like not your Project, but I would rather have you ſhew your Art in making my Houſe more open, that all may ſee me, for I am not aſhamed of what I do. You may apply this to the preſent Purpoſe; be not ſollicitous to hide or diſguiſe your Actions, but live as if all Men ſaw your Lives, as if the Eyes of all the World look'd upon you; for ſo they certainly ſhall at the Laſt Day. Think then how vain it is to play the Hypocrite, to pretend to be what you are not, when as the Time is coming wherein all your Pretences ſhall vaniſh, and the whole World ſhall know what you are.

5*ly* and *laſtly*, PUT thy ſelf into the Poſture of an humble Supplicant, fall down with a mighty Reverence before the great God, from whom every good and perfect Gift cometh, and moſt ardently beg to be Partaker of this Evangelical Grace. Importunately beſeech the Author of all Purity to confer this Heavenly Bleſſing upon thee. Thus did the Pſalmiſt, *Create in me* (ſaith he) *a clean Heart* (the ſame with the *pure Heart* in the Text) *and renew a right Spirit within me*, a Spirit ſincere and upright, and clear from the Defilements of Hypocriſy. Let *us* put up the ſame Petition to the Father of Mercies; let us beſeech him to purify our Hearts from all Guile and Deceit, from unclean Thoughts and carnal Affections, and whatever pollutes our Souls, and makes us unfit for *ſeeing God.*

AND ſo I paſs to the third General Head which I propounded, *viz.* to ſhew the Nature of the *Bleſſedneſs* promiſed to the Pure in Heart, and that is *ſeeing of God.* As for the more large and general Bleſſedneſs attending on this Grace, it is thus repreſented to us by the Pſalmiſt, *Who ſhall aſcend into the Hill of the Lord, and who ſhall ſtand in his holy Place? He that hath clean Hands and a pure Heart*, Pſal. xxiv. 3, 4. *Bleſſed is the Man in whoſe Spirit there is no Guile*, Pſal. xxxii. 2. *Bleſſed are the Undefiled in the Way*, Pſal. cxix. 1. But that which I am to inſiſt upon is the particular and peculiar Bleſſedneſs which is proper to this Grace, and that is the Viſion of God, *they ſhall ſee God.*

TO ſpeak of this exactly, I ſhall conſider it firſt negatively, and then poſitively. By *ſeeing God* is not here meant, 1. An *external* and *bodily* Viſion; to ſee God thus is impoſſible, for our Organs of Sight are framed for a lower Office, they have Commerce with nothing but what is ſenſible. Beſides, from the Nature of God we may be convinced that he cannot be ſeen by the corporeal Eye, for he is a *Spirit*, and conſequently hath no Figure, and no Dimenſions, and no Parts, and therefore we cannot have any View of him by our bodily Eye. Hence the inſpired Author hath told us, that *no Man hath ſeen God at any Time*, John i. 4, 12. and St. *Paul* ſtiles God *the King inviſible*, 1 Tim. i. 17. *Whom no Man hath ſeen or can ſee*, 1 Tim. vi. 16. 2*dly*, This Seeing of God is not ſeeing an *Angel* who comes in God's Name, and, as it were, perſonates him, and therefore in the Old Teſtament this is ſometimes call'd Seeing of God. But no ſuch Thing is meant here, for here is no Mention of the Appearance of any Angel, and therefore this *Seeing* cannot refer to that. 3*dly*, This is no *Prophetical Viſion*, ſuch as that in 1 *Kings* xxii. 19. and many other Inſtances there are of God's appearing by an ecſtatical Viſion or Dream, from whence,

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* Sic vivendum eſt tanquam in conſpectu vivamus: ſic cogitandum tanquam aliquis in pectus intimum inſpicere poſſit, & poteſt. *Epiſt.* 84.

'tis likely, the *Prophets* had the Denomination of *Seers*. This cannot be here meant, becauſe it hath long ſince ceaſed, whereas the Bleſſedneſs entail'd on the Pure in Heart is laſting and perpetual.

MORE poſitively I am to acquaint you what this Seeing *is*. It comprehends in it theſe two Things, *Knowledge* and *Fruition*. The Pure in Heart ſhall ſee God, that is, they ſhall know him, and they ſhall enjoy him. Firſt, to ſee God is to know him, to have a mental Perception of him: This cannot be ſtrange to thoſe who are acquainted with the Stile of Scripture, for Underſtanding and Knowledge are expreſſed there by the bodily Sight; but I do not mean a bare ſpeculative Knowledge of God, for that is no conſiderable Excellency; the Devils themſelves are not deny'd this Beholding of God, theſe Δαιμονες, theſe knowing Creatures, may have a Proſpect of the Perfections that are in God, therefore 'tis not probable that our Saviour doth here annex a Bleſſedneſs to this alone. But though 'tis not a bare and naked Speculation of God, yet it is a cognoſcitive Viſion. The Pure in Heart have an Inſight into his divine Nature, Properties, and Attributes; into his Works of Providence, and his Government of the Univerſe; they terminate not their Sight on the Outſide of this World, but they look through and beyond it to a better one; they know God's Will expreſſed in his Word, and are acquainted with the great Things that relate to their Salvation; they penetrate into thoſe divine Truths which are hid from others; they are made capable of underſtanding thoſe Myſteries in Chriſtianity, thoſe peculiar Doctrines and Diſcoveries of the Goſpel, which carnal Minds are Strangers to. This is the *Knowledge* that is the Privilege of thoſe who are Pure in Heart.

AND it muſt be thus, not only by the Diſpoſal of God, by the Method which he hath revealed to us in his Word, *Follow Holineſs, without which no Man ſhall ſee God.* It is a ſtanding Law and Decree made by the Wiſdom of God, that divine Things are to be underſtood by divine and pure Minds, and by no other; I ſay, it is thus, not only by the Diſpoſal of Heaven, but in the very *Nature of the Thing itſelf*; for by Purity of Heart and Life, by abſtaining from fleſhly Luſts and the Pollutions of Sin, we are fitted and capacitated for the Knowing of God, and all ſacred and heavenly Things. A Purgation of the Mind from vicious Habits diſpoſes us for the better Entertainment of Truth, and for the clearer Underſtanding of the Myſteries of Religion, and the whole Doctrine of the Goſpel, in which Chriſt Jeſus is moſt lively repreſented to us. There is in thoſe Perſons, who are of pure Hearts, a peculiar ſpiritual Perception of the Things of God, which is not common to the Impure. *The natural Man receives not the Things of the Spirit of God, for they are Fooliſhneſs unto him, neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. But the Notions which are flat and dull, and even unintelligible to the carnal Mind, are clear and manifeſt to the ſpiritually minded Man.

I WILL propound this one Conſideration to evince this Truth, namely, That God is pure and holy, and conſequently none can ſee him but thoſe who are pure and holy; for the Faculty and the Object muſt agree, and be alike, or elſe there will be no Commerce between them. This is true in Divinity as well as in Philoſophy, and gives us the true Reaſon why unholy and impure Souls are not in a Capacity to know God. The Eye of the Mind muſt be cleared and purged, and freed from all Tinctures and Blemiſhes, that it may diſtinctly diſcern the heavenly Objects preſented to it. The inordinate Paſſions and Luſts muſt be corrected, becauſe theſe put the Soul into Diſorder and Confuſion, they raiſe a Duſt, and diſturb the Medium, ſo that we cannot attain to a right View of divine Things. It is obſervable, that after the Apoſtle's Exhortation in 2 *Pet.* i. 5, *&c. To add to Faith Virtue, and to Virtue Knowledge*, (that is, an experimental Senſe of Virtue) *and to Knowledge Temperance, and to Temperance Patience, and to Patience Godlineſs, and to Godlineſs brotherly Kindneſs, and to brotherly Kindneſs Charity* (which is a more extenſive and univerſal Affection); after this Exhortation to all Manner of Holineſs, there is this ſuggeſted by Way of Reaſon, *v.* 9. *He that lacketh theſe Things is blind, and cannot ſee far off*; as much as to ſay, Impurity of Life is attended with Blindneſs of Mind and Want of ſpiritual Knowledge. Impure Affections render the Mind diſſolute and wandering, ſo that it cannot attend to, and fix upon the Matters which relate to God and Religion;

but the Mind is fixed and compoſed by Holineſs, and thereby fitted for the Viſion of God. What I have thus briefly ſuggeſted may ſatisfy us, how the *Seeing of God* is the proper Reward and Recompence of *Purity of Heart*, and why none are capable of ſeeing God without this. And this holds good of the future State as well as of this. It is Purity that capacitates us then for the knowing of God; for there is only this Difference between our preſent and our future Knowledge, that the former is imperfect, but the latter is abſolute and compleat; but both are founded in Holineſs and Purity.

Secondly, *SEEING of God* is the *Fruition* of him: It is the partaking of all the Benefits that flow from our Communion with him. As by the Underſtanding we know God, ſo it is by the Will and Affections eſpecially, that we enjoy him. By Fear and Reverence, by ardent Deſires and Longings, by inflamed Love, by rejoicing and delighting in him, we are nearly united to him, and hold Commerce with him. *Our Hands do handle of the Word of Life*, we have a Feeling of divine Things, a ſpiritual Senſation of them; which is effected, by being abſtracted and freed from the Defilements of the Fleſh. But on the contrary, ſenſual Luſts diſtort the Will (as we obſerved before, that they blind the Intellect) and thereby incapacitate us for converſing with God, and all ſpiritual Objects. How can it be otherwiſe, ſeeing there is ſuch an Incongruity between ſpiritual and ſenſual Things? Impurity hath nothing to do with divine Purity; it hath no more Fellowſhip with it, than Light with Darkneſs. Obſerve St. *James*'s Exhortation in Chap. iv. Ver. 3. *Draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh to you: Cleanſe your Hands ye Sinners, and purify your Hearts ye double-minded.* From the Connection of which Words, 'tis clear, that the Uncleanneſs of our Hands, and the Pollution of our Hearts, hinder our Communion and Converſe with God. A wicked and corrupt Life, and Diſpoſition of Mind, ſet God at a Diſtance from us; but the contrary bring us near to him, and him to us.

THIS *Enjoyment* of God is in the other Life alſo, and moſt ſignally indeed in that: But it is in the ſame Way, that it is in this preſent World; that is, by Purity and Holineſs. Only Grace and Glory differ, as an imperfect and perfect State: Here our ſpiritual Joys and Delights are neither full nor laſting, but hereafter, there is *Fulneſs of Joy* in God's beatifick *Preſence*, and *at his right Hand there are Pleaſures for evermore.* And thus I have ſhewn you the Connection between the *Grace* in the Text, and the peculiar *Bleſſedneſs* promis'd to it: *Bleſſed are the Pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God.*

THESE three brief Inferences ſhall ſhut up the whole Diſcourſe:

1. SETTLE your Notions and Apprehenſions right, concerning the chriſtian Religion. The Doctrine, which I have inſiſted on, will hugely conduce to this Purpoſe, and will remove that Reproach which is caſt upon Chriſtianity, by thoſe who endeavour to make it ſpeak in Favour of their licentious and wicked Practices. The chriſtian Religion is no Friend to Prophaneneſs and Libertiniſm. He, that names the Name of Jeſus, muſt depart from Iniquity. The Profeſſion of Chriſt engages us to Purity and Holineſs. He that hath this Faith, and this Hope in him, purifies himſelf, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks. What one ſaith of the *Pythagorean* Philoſophy, is true, and truly only of the *Chriſtian*; *It is the Purgation and Perfection of human Life. Its whole Deſign is to refine and exalt the Nature of Man, and to make him reſemble the pureſt Being. Frame then true Conceptions of the excellent Religion which you profeſs: Often preſent unto your Minds the admirable Idea of it.

2. LEARN hence the indiſpenſable Neceſſity of a holy Life, in order to preſent and future Happineſs: The Pure in Heart, and they only, ſhall ſee God. Evangelical Poverty is a neceſſary Preparative to the Viſion of God: Without this we are not capable of knowing and enjoying him in this Life, or in that to come. The Church, which is the Spouſe of Chriſt, is call'd by him *his Undefiled*, Cant. v. 2. And the Apoſtle tells us, ſhe muſt be preſented unto Chriſt, *without Spot or Wrinkle, or any ſuch Thing*; that is, any Thing that defiles her. And the Church in Heaven is much more freed from all Defilement; *there ſhall in no wiſe enter into it* (the new *Jeruſalem* above) *any thing that defileth*, Rev. xxi. v. 5. Be convinced then of the Neceſſity of chriſtian Purity, in order to your

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* Φιλοσοφία ἐστὶ ζωῆς ἀνθρωπίνης κάθαρσις καὶ τελειότης. Hierocles.

preſent and future Bliſs; and, at the ſame time, ſee the Unreaſonableneſs and Fondneſs of thoſe Mens Hopes, who expect Heaven and eternal Happineſs, and yet lead impure and unholy Lives.

3. If our Saviour pronounces the Pure in Heart *Bleſſed*, becauſe they ſhall *ſee God*; and if the Viſion of God and Happineſs be all one, then how miſerable and wretched muſt they needs be, who remain impure and unholy? They neither know God nor enjoy him here, nor ſhall they have the Sight and Fruition of him hereafter. This is their unſpeakable Miſery, which we ought ſo ſeriouſly to lay to Heart, as to be effectually excited to abandon our Sins and Impurities, that we may not be of the Number of thoſe wretched and curſed Perſons, who ſhall never ſee God.

THE

THE SEVENTH BEATITUDE OF CHRISTIAN PEACE-MAKING.

MATT. V. 9.

Bleſſed are the Peace-makers, for they ſhall be called the Children of God.

IN proſecuting theſe Words, *Firſt*, I will ſhew who are the *true Peace-makers*, or what is the Nature of this Chriſtian Grace and Duty of *Peace-making*: *Secondly*, I will deſcribe the *diſtinct Lineaments* and *particular Branches* of it. *Thirdly*, I will explain the *Bleſſedneſs*, which is the Reward of this Grace. And *Fourthly*, I will put a *Cloſe* to all by a *Practical Improvement* of the Whole.

Firſt, WHO are the *true Peace-makers?* I anſwer, 1. They who *love* Peace. 2. They who endeavour after it. *Firſt*, I ſay, They are ſuch as love Peace. This ſpeaks their inward Diſpoſition: Their Minds are moulded and framed into peaceable Thoughts, whereby they become mild, gentle and affable, averſe from Quarrels and Contentions, and willing to live peaceable and quiet Lives in all Godlineſs and Honeſty. Even this is *Peace making*, for the learned *Hammond* obſerves, that the Notion of *making* in the Stile of Scripture, oftentimes denotes the Bent and Tendency of the Heart, the Inclination and Affection of the Soul; as in thoſe Phraſes uſed by St. *John* in his [*]Epiſtles, *to make Sin*, and *to make Righteouſneſs*, which our Tranſlators renders *doing Sin* and *doing Righteouſneſs*. And ſo [†] *to make Peace*, ſpeaks the inward Deſign and Diſpoſition of the Heart? And the [‖] *Peace makers* in the Text, are [‖‖] thoſe that are at Peace within themſelves, that have no Sedition and Civil Wars in their own Breaſts, as a pious Father interprets it. They are of a quiet and ſedate Temper, their Breaſts are calm and ſerene, they feel no boiſterous Commotions within themſelves, and bear an univerſal good Will to all Men.

ACCORDINGLY therefore, in the ſecond Place, their utmoſt *Endeavours* are to promote Peace wherever they come. Peace-making is an actual advancing of Peace among all Perſons. The inward Love of Peace will diſcover itſelf, by outward and apparent Enterprizes in Mens Lives. If they be of a compoſed and placid Temper, their Undertakings and Actions in the World will aſſure us of it. They will expreſs the Efficacy of this divine Grace, and will reckon

[*] Ποιεῖν ἁμαρτίαν, ποιεῖν δικαιοσύνην.

[†] Ποιεῖν εἰρήνην, 3 Jam. 18.

[‖] Εἰρηνοποιοὶ.

[‖‖] Οἱ πρῶτον μὲν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς εἰρηνεύοντες καὶ μὴ διαστασιάζοντες, Iſidor. Pelul. Ep. l. 4.

it their Buſineſs to eſtabliſh Unity and Peace. They are obſervant of St. *Paul's* Exhortation in Rom. xii. 18. *If it be poſſible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all Men.* If you eſpy any Way or Track that leads to a godly Peace, ſtrike into it, and perſiſt in it, and invite others to walk with you in the ſame Path. Let not any thing be wanting on your Part, towards the proſecuting the Deſigns of Peace and Amity, uſe your utmoſt Skill and Endeavours; which perhaps is meant by the Apoſtle, when he bids us *follow Peace*, Heb. xii. 14. Though Peace flies from us, we muſt follow after it, and lay hold on it, which 'tis likely was borrow'd from Pſ. xxxv. 15. *Seek Peace and enſue it:* Whereby is ſignified that we are oblig'd with all Diligence and Application, to gain the Poſſeſſion of this Bleſſing. And then, if the Event anſwers not our Enterprizes and Wiſhes, we are not in Fault. Perhaps our Caſe may be the ſame with *David's*, in *Pſ.* cxx. 6. 7. *My Soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth Peace: I am for Peace, but when I ſpeak they are for War.* If it be thus with us, we are to comfort ourſelves in the ſincere Tenders that we have made: Having done our Duty, we muſt leave the Succeſs to God. And thus we ſee in *General* who are the Peace-makers.

BUT *Secondly*, , I am to deſcribe the more particular and diſtinct Lineaments of this Grace. And *Peace* being either *Religious* or *Civil*, I muſt conſider it in both thoſe Capacities. Firſt then, if we ſpeak of Peace as it relates to Religion, the Chriſtian Peace-makers may be known by ſuch Characters as theſe,

1. THEY perfectly agree in all the Eſſentials of Religion: There is an entire Accordance as to all fundamental Verities. Here according to the Apoſtle's Advice, *they all ſpeak the ſame thing, and there is no Diviſion among them.* Chriſtianity itſelf is deſtroy'd, if its neceſſary Doctrines be diſregarded, if the Profeſſors of it do not hold and maintain all that belongs to its Foundation. Otherwiſe their Profeſſion is vain and empty, and they are Chriſtians only in Name, but not in Truth and Reality, Wherefore there is an abſolute Neceſſity of believing and aſſerting theſe important Truths; herein we muſt all agree, and there muſt be a perfect Harmony.

2. THE Chriſtian Peace-maker, though he agrees with his Brethren in all the Fundamentals and chief Heads of Religion, yet he never quarrels about *nice* and *trifling Queſtions*, and ſuch as no Ways tend to *Edification.* Meer verbal Digladiations are below him, and he ſcorns to ſtand upon Punctilio's. He reckons it a childiſh and abſurd thing, to ſquabble on mean and worthleſs Occaſions. It is unworthy of a Man, much more of a Chriſtian, to draw his Sword to fight about the *Point* of it, to whet his Weapon to divide an *Indiviſible*, to doom Men for a *Trifle*, to drown Men for a *Bubble*. As it is not the Deſign of Scripture, to fill our Heads with ſubtle Notions, and to determine needleſs Points, ſo he doth not concern himſelf in theſe Matters. He contends earneſtly for the Faith, but not for Fancies and quaint Speculations: He doth not wrangle and fall out about unprofitable and fruitleſs Enquiries in Religion.

3. As to thoſe things that are *diſputable* and *dubious*, or that are in themſelves *indifferent*, he ſhews himſelf a Peace-maker, by not being peremptory and definitive. There are ſome things of which we have but little Hints, and very imperfect Diſcoveries. Like the *Andabatæ*, we fight blindfold, we combat in the Dark, we quarrel about things we underſtand not. It is in vain to expect that all Men; nay, all good Men ſhould exactly agree in their Judgments about theſe dubious and uncertain Matters. The Difference of our *Educations*, and of our *Complexions*, and of the *Society* we affect is very great, and hath a huge Influence upon us, and will never ſuffer us to Accord in all Points. How vain then is it to wrangle with much Paſſion about theſe things? How irrational is it to tye all Men to our Perſwaſion? Yea, how unreaſonable is it to ſtrive to fix a Perſwaſion on our ſelves. The beſt Courſe we can take in theſe Diſputes, is to ſuſpend our Judgments; and in ſome Caſes not to declare what we think. Our private Perſwaſions need not always be made publick. We are not bound to divulge all our Sentiments, and to make Proſelytes to them: But on the contrary we ſhould ſtifle our Conceptions, and keep them to ourſelves, if we know that the divulging them will be deſtructive to Peace and Order. For this we have the Apoſtle's Command, *Haſt thou Faith,* (that is, a particular Perſwaſion about the Uſe of ſome indifferent things,) *have it to thy ſelf,* Rom. xiv. 22. An excellent Rule to avoid Offence, and to maintain Chriſtian Peace and Amity; I mean as to things *meerly Indifferent*, and which have no Influence on the neceſſary Parts

of Religion. In ſuch a Caſe, obtrude not thy Opinion upon others, but reſerve it to thy ſelf, and in the mean time ſcan it over again: Examine it often and without Prejudice, and perhaps by that time thou wilt think otherwiſe. I hope this plain Dealing will not be unacceptable to plain and honeſt Readers, who ſtand ready to embrace the Truth.

4. The Chriſtian Peace-maker is very careful not to cenſure and condemn thoſe that differ from him in *indifferent* Points. He is not heard to load them with reproachful Names and opprobrious Appellations. For theſe are to be found only in the Devil's Dictionary, in Hell's Lexicon, and they were Terms invented and uſed on Purpoſe to keep Brethren at Diſtance from one another, and to render them vile and contemptible, and to create Variance, and to exaſperate Mens Minds. He is far from imitating thoſe fiery Spirits, who are wont to damn others for an Indifferency. Becauſe they cannot agree with them in ſome Points here, they will not ſuffer them to be happy hereafter. This the Chriſtian Peace-maker abhors, yea every rational Man muſt do ſo, for how abſurd and unaccountable is it, becauſe my Neighbour claſhes with me in Opinion therefore to thruſt him into Hell? doth this ſavour of Sobriety and Reaſon? or, to ſpeak higher, is the true Goſpel Genius diſcover'd by ſuch a Procedure? No certainly; Heaven is large enough to hold Men of different Perſwaſions and diſſenting Judgments (elſe I fear few are got thither, and not many will follow after) and therefore it argues an ill Spirit in us to ſhut theſe out thence.

5. It is eſſential to the Character of a Chriſtian Peace-maker, that he agrees with others in Affection, tho' they are diſ-joined from him in Judgment and Opinion as to ſome things in Religion. He embraces all Men in the Arms of Love and good Will, conſidering this with himſelf, that we ſhall never conſpire all of us in our Opinions, and yet the indiſpenſible Laws of Chriſtianity oblige us to meet in our Affections. We cannot all arrive to the ſame Meaſure of Knowledge, but we are bound to maintain a mutual Correſpondence and reciprocal Amity. My Brother perhaps cannot conſent to ſome Propoſitions which I hold, but he and I can ſay *Amen* to the ſame Prayers, and we hope to meet in the ſame Heaven: And 'tis fit we ſhould love one another before we come thither. What, though I cannot ſubſcribe to my Brother's Sentiments? yet I muſt embrace him with my Charity. Though our Heads be of a different Mould, yet this ſhould not hinder our Hearts from being of the ſame Frame. It is to be conſider'd, that good Men ſometimes purſue a good Meaning in a contrary Way to one another. It is their Miſinformation, and not their Perverſneſs that makes them ſeek the true End by oppoſite Means. When Men agree in the main and neceſſary Matters, and are humble, and pray, and live well, I hope they all deſign the beſt. Wherefore let not a Diſagreement about leſſer Matters diſturb us, and create Diviſion. Let this be remember'd and urg'd, that nothing can excuſe us from loving one another. Though we grant that the things are indifferent about which we diſſent, yet *hating one another* is not indifferent. And then we are ſure *Perſecution* is not: We ought not to uſe Force and Violence for the promoting of meer Rites and Ceremonies; if we do ſo, the Remedy will ſurpaſs the Malady. If we obtain a *Conqueſt* that way, it will not deſerve a *Triumph*. It may be refuſed with a great deal more reaſon than *Julius Cæſar*, returning to *Rome*, after he had vanquiſh'd *Pompey* the Great, excepted not of it when offered to him, becauſe the Victory was over a *Roman* Citizen. When we boaſt of our Conqueſt over our Chriſtian Brethren (who as *Fellow-citizens*, Eph. ii. 10.) we weaken our ſelves, and prey upon our own kind, and endamage the Publick Intereſt of Religion.

But in the next Place, Peace-making may be conſidered as it hath reference to *Civil Affairs*, and to our mutual Commerce with one another in the ſecular Buſineſs we are concern'd in. And here the true Peace-makers are known by ſuch Marks as theſe, they are ready to acknowledge their Faults and Miſcarriages towards their Brethren: And they offer Terms of Requital to all Perſons whom they have wrong'd, they freely make Satisfaction to thoſe whom they have injured. Nay, they not only recompenſe thoſe who they have wrong'd, but they are willing to offer Terms of Peace and Reconcilement, to thoſe that have wrong'd and injur'd them. They are deſirous to overcome their Enemies with Meekneſs and Forbearance. This, as 'tis the height of Chriſtianity, ſo 'tis an infallible Mark of the Evangelical Peace-makers.

AND ſo is this which follows, they not only ſtudy to endear all Perſons *to themſelves*, but they ſtrive to maintain Unity and Peace among *others*. They reckon it Part of their Employment to make Agreement among the different Parties: They make up the Breaches which they ſee lie open, they extinguiſh the Fires they obſerve are kindled, they cloſe the Wounds which they find gaping. Theſe are the Peace-makers, and that in the moſt proper and genuine Senſe. Too many delight in Animoſities, and love to ſee their Brethren at Strife and Variance, they promote Feuds and Quarrels, they throw Oyl into the Flames inſtead of quenching them, they widen a Scratch into a Wound. But nothing can be more contrary to the true evangelical Spirit, for this endeavours to put a Period to all unhappy Diſputes, to ſtifle all unchriſtian Differences, Heart-burnings, and Contentions among Neighbours. It not only heals and cloſes the Wounds, but ſtrengthens and conſolidates the Part, and ties the Knot of Friendſhip and Love faſter and cloſer.

MOREOVER, this peaceable Temper cauſes Men to yield and ſubmit, for the promoting of Charity. We may obſerve this in a notable Inſtance recorded in the Holy Scripture, *Gen.* xiii. 7, &c. when *Abraham* and *Lot* fell out, though the former was Uncle to the latter, and in that reſpect his Superior, yet we find that *he* was the Perſon who ſought Peace, and was ready to yield to the other, who was his Inferior. The beſt Spirits are ſubmiſſive and pliant: They will even recede from their Right, and abate of their Due, eſpecially for the Publick Good. Thus Chriſt bad his Apoſtles pay the Tax-money, though (as he ſaid at the ſame time) the Children of the Kingdom were free. We are not always to inſiſt rigorouſly on our Right, even when we deal with thoſe that are our Equals; yea when the Debate is between us and thoſe that are below us. We muſt comply with the Infirmities and Weakneſſes of our Brethren, by denying ourſelves in ſome things, that we may gain upon them in ſome others; by reſtraining ourſelves in our Liberty ſometimes, that thereby we may for ever oblige them in Affection to us. But we are to remember that we are ſo to *yield*, as ſtill to keep our *Integrity*; ſo to bow to our Brother's Weakneſs, as to ſtand upright in our own Conſciences. We muſt be ſure to keep the Centre, we muſt ſet our Foot faſt there, and then we may incline more or leſs in Charity to our Brother, who it may be is placed in the utmoſt Circumference. *In ſome things we offend all*, and here we muſt forgive all: And in other things there muſt be a mutual Compliance. In ſhort, the Peace-maker is he who is Peaceable in his Mind and Affections in his Words and Language, in his outward Carriage and Deportment. He diſcovers his quiet Temper on all Occaſions, in every Emergency of his Life, at home and abroad, in private and in publick, in his Family, in the whole Neighbourhood, in the Church and in the State.

I AM to proceed in the third Place, to the *Bleſſedneſs* which is annexed to this Grace. And this is expreſs'd firſt in a *General* Manner, *Bleſſed are the Peace makers.* Many things might be ſaid in deſcribing the *Bleſſedneſs* of theſe Perſons, but I will Inſtance only in this one; namely the *Delight* and *Pleaſure* which attend the Practiſe of this Grace. Which is taken notice of, and thus expreſſed by the Pſalmiſt in thoſe Words of Admiration, Pſ. cxxxiii. 1. *Behold how good and how pleaſant it is for Brethren to dwell together in Unity!* Two things are here joyn'd together in the Commendation of this Vertue, which ſeldom meet together; that is, Goodneſs and Pleaſantneſs. There are ſome *good* things which are not *pleaſant*, as thoſe wholeſome Medicines which are bitter: And there are things *pleaſant* (that is, they are ſo to the corrupted Nature of Men) which are not *good*: There are the *Pleaſures of Sin*, Heb. xi. 25. But where *Goodneſs* and *Pleaſantneſs* meet together, there is all that we can wiſh and deſire to make us Bleſſed. Brotherly Peace is *good*, good in its own Nature: And 'tis *good*, becauſe 'tis agreeable to the Will of God, who is the chief Good. But moreover, it is *Pleaſant*, it is Matter of Delight and Joy to the Perſons themſelves, who are Poſſeſſors and Practiſers of this Grace. For this Reaſon 'tis compared to the precious Oyntment which was pour'd on the High-Prieſt's Head when he was conſecrated, and diffus'd itſelf to the Skirts of his Garment, *ver.* 12. of the forementioned Pſalm. Which ſets forth the *Pleaſantneſs* of fraternal Peace and Unity: It is like ſome fragrant Scent and Perfume, that ſpreads its delightful Odour, and is refreſhing to all thoſe that come near it. And the Pſalmiſt compares it yet further, to *the Dew which deſcended on the Mountains of Hermon and*

Sion, ver. 3. which ſtill expreſſes the cheriſhing and delightful Vertue of the peaceable Spirit. It is a very remarkable Saying of a Learned Father, ſpeaking of this *Beatitude* in the Text, * "I wonder, ſaith he, at the Divine Goodneſs, which not only recompences our Labours and Troubles, but promiſes Rewards alſo to our Pleaſures and Delights; for Peace is a thing of that "Nature, moſt delectable and joyful. O that inward Complacency which "Peace-makers feel in their own Breaſts! Whatever Diſcords are without, they "have always Muſick within.

* Iſidor. Peluſ. Epiſt. lib. 4.

But I paſt to the *particular Bleſſedneſs* promiſed to the Peace-makers, *They ſhall be called the Children of God.* This Phraſe *to be call'd* doth frequently amongſt the *Hebrews* expreſs the *true Nature* and Condition of the Thing or Perſon; ſo that *to be called*, is as much as *to be.* I will give you one Inſtance of this in 1 *John* iii. 1. compared with *John* i. 12. [Behold what manner of Love the Father hath beſtowed on us, that we ſhould *be called* the Sons of God?] Which in the other Place is expreſſed thus, [As many as received him to them gave he Power to *become* the Sons of God.] Here, as in the Text, *to be call* and *to be*, are convertible. Take then the full Senſe of the Beatitude in theſe two Particulars,

1. The Peace-makers are truly and really the *Children of God*; that is, they are eminent and excellent Perſons, and of more Dignity then others. This was the ancient way of ſpeaking: The pious Offſpring of *Seth* are called *the Sons of God* Gen. vi. 2, 4. This is the Denomination given to the Angelick Spirits, *Job.* i. 6. ii. 1. xxxviii. 7. becauſe of their Dignity and Excellency: And by the Pſalmiſt they are called the *Sons of the Mighty*, Pſ. lxxxix. 6. And the like Title is conferr'd on Magiſtrates and Judges, *Pſ.* lxxxii. 6. where they are called the *Children of the moſt High*, by reaſon of their Eminency and Worth. And from hence this Manner of ſpeaking might paſs to ſome of the beſt Philoſophers, for *Hierocles* calls the Heroes and eminent Men, * *the Sons of God*, and tells us that the *Pythagoreans* uſed to ſpeak after this Faſhion. That this was the uſual Phraſe among the Gentiles appears from *Dan.* iii. 25. *the Form of the Fourth is like the Son of God*, and from *Mat.* xxvii. 54. *Truly this was the Son of God*, which could not be meant of Chriſt, as he was the Second Perſon in the Trinity; for that was too high a Flight for the *Centurion* who was a *Pagan*, but his Meaning was, that Chriſt was a very excellent Perſon, a Man even of Divine Vertue and extraordinary Worth. So his Followers, who are of an excellent Spirit, and ſhew it more ſignally in their peaceable and quiet Diſpoſition, and in their Endeavours to promote univerſal Peace and Concord, may juſtly be ſaid to be the *Sons of God*, the true Offſpring of the God of Peace and Unity.

* Θεῶν παῖδας. Comment. in Pythag. Carm.

But there is a higher and more particular Senſe of this Expreſſion in this Beatitude. The Peace-makers have a Title to the Divine *Sonſhip*, which is ſo often mentioned in the Writings of the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles. *To them that received him, he gave Power to become the Sons of God*, John. i. 12. *They that are led by the Spirit of God are the Sons of God*, Rom. viii. 14. *We are the Sons of God*, 1 Joh. iii. 2. We are ſo by being adopted, and accordingly we read of *the Adoption of Sons*, Gal. iv. 5. and *the Adoption of Children*, Eph. i. 5. This is that peculiar Priviledge whereby thoſe that are in the Favour of God, are not only taken into his Family, and are under his ſingular Care and Protection but have likewiſe the Honour to be his *Sons and Children*; and being ſuch, the Apoſtle tells us, *they are Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint-heirs with Chriſt*, Rom. viii. 17. This is that tranſcendent Priviledge which the Chriſtian Peace-makers have a right to, and from which they may deſervedly be ſaid to be *Bleſſed*.

2. The Peace-makers ſhall not only *be* the Sons of God, but they ſhall *be called* ſo, they ſhall be *manifeſted* to be ſo. I will borrow a Sentence from a Platoniſt, which expreſſes this very well [† All humane Souls, ſaith he, are the Children of God, but they do not all of them acknowledge him for their God, but thoſe of them that acknowledge him, and lead a Life anſwerable to it *are called the Children of God*,] they manifeſt it to the World. The Image of God is plainly ſeen upon them, and cannot but be taken Notice of. *In this the Children of God are manifeſt*, as St. *John* ſpeaks. It is a clear Evidence of our being the true Sons of God that we are Peace-makers. We may prove our heavenly Lineage by this: The Son is preſumed to reſemble his Father; if we are the Children of God, we are like him.

† Πᾶσαι ψυχαὶ θεῶν παῖδες, ἀλλ' οὐ πᾶσαι τὸν ἑαυτῶν ἐπέγνωσαν θεόν· αἱ δὲ ἐπιγνοῦσαι καὶ τὴν ὁμοίαν ἑλόμεναι ζωὴν, καλοῦνται θεῶν παῖδες. Procl.

I WILL ſhew this diſtinctly with reſpect to the Matter which is before us: Firſt, By being Peace-makers we are like unto God, who is the *Author of Peace*, 1 Cor. xiv. 33. therefore ſignally ſtiled *the God of Peace*, Rom. xvi. 20. Phil. iv. 9. Secondly, We reſemble Chriſt Jeſus, who is the great Example of Peace. He *made Peace through the Blood of his Croſs*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Col.* i. 20. and more fully in *Eph.* ii. 14. *He is our Peace, who hath made both* (Jew and Gentile) *one, and hath broken down the middle Wall of Partition between us,* —— *ſo making Peace* —— *and that he might reconcile both unto God* —— *and came and preached Peace to them which were afar off, and to them that are nigh.* When Chriſt came into the World, *Peace on Earth* was ſung and proclaim'd: And when he went out of the World, *Peace* was given and bequeath'd by him. Certainly then the Spirit of Peace is according to the great Pattern of Peace. *Thirdly*, By being Peace-makers we reſemble God, who is not only the Author and Example of Peace, but who alſo ſtrictly commands and enjoyns it. *Obedience* is the true Badge of *Children*: In this we manifeſt our ſelves to be the Sons of our heavenly Father; namely, that we are obſequious to his Commands, one of which is this, that we ſtudy Peace and good Will. Moſt remarkable are our Saviour's Words in the 44th and 45th Verſes of this Chapter, wherein the Text is, *Love your Enemies*, ſaith he, *bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you*, &c. which are all of them high Inſtances of a peaceable and ſedate Temper: And the Encouragement to act thus is adjoyned in the following Words, *That you may be the Children of your Father which is in Heaven, for he maketh the Sun to ſhine on the Evil and on the Good, &c.* you cannot evidence your ſelves to be the *Children of God* by any better Proof than *this*. A Divine Character is impreſſed on the Peace-makers. By a peaceable and loving Temper we approach near to the Godlike Nature: But the Diabolical Spirit dwells in them of a contrary Genius. Satan was the firſt Head of a Faction, and where you ſee Diviſions you may be ſure he hath been there. It is his proper Work to ſow the Seeds of Strife and Contention: And therefore thoſe who follow him in theſe Steps are not *the Children of God*, but are of their Father the Devil, and have nothing of the Divine Life in them. Thus I have briefly ſhew'd how the Goſpel Peace-makers are the *Children of God*.

AND now there are theſe four things which follow naturally upon their being ſo, and which do plainly demonſtrate the Greatneſs of this *Beatitude*. Firſt, the Peace-makers being *God's Sons*, are beloved of him. The very Title of *Son* implies this, *Behold, what manner of Love the Father hath beſtow'd upon us, that we ſhould be called the Children of God!* 1 John iii. 1. Secondly, Being God's Children, we may aſſure our ſelves of Proviſion and Maintenance. Theſe even earthly Parents reckon to be due to their Children. Thirdly, Freedom is an Attendant of Sonſhip, This is called by the Apoſtle, *the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God*, Rom. viii 21. Fourthly, the Inheritance follows Sonſhip. Peace-making is crown'd with eternal Peace in the higheſt Heavens. Here is the ample *Bleſſedneſs* of Peace-makers.

THUS having finiſhed the Third Head, I proceed to the Fourth and Laſt, which is the Practical Improvement of this Doctrine of Peace-making. Firſt, then by way of *Caution* (that I may ſet the juſt Limits and Boundaries of this Duty, and that I may not be miſtaken in any thing that I have ſaid) ſo remember to be *Peace-makers*, as not to forget to join both *Truth* and *Holineſs* with the Peace you ſtudy. He is no Chriſtian Peace-maker, who dares to exclude theſe in his Articles and Terms of Peace. You can't but obſerve, that *Peace* and *Truth* are joyn'd together by the Prophet *Jeremy*, or rather by God himſelf, Jer. xxxiii. 6. *Abundance of Peace and Truth* is there promiſed to the Church, as a fit and proper Bleſſing for it. And God's People are commanded *to love the Truth and Peace*, Zech. viii. 19. The worſt Sects pretend to Peace: They that maintain the damnableſt Doctrines cry it up. The moſt blaſphemous Books are ſaid to be printed at *Irenopolis*. But be not deceived, value not that Peace which is ſeparated from Truth and ſound Principles.

So likewiſe *Peace* and Holineſs muſt be in Conjunction, according to that of the Pſalmiſt, *Depart from Evil and do Good, ſeek Peace and enſue it*, Pſ. xxxiv. 14. And ſo the Author to the *Hebrews*, chap. xii. 14. *Follow Peace with all Men and Holineſs, without which*, (Holineſs as well as Peace,) *no Man ſhall ſee the Lord.* The Apoſtle prays for the *Theſſalonians*, that *the God of Peace would ſanctify them wholly*, 1 Theſſ. v. 23. The God of Peace is the God of Sanctity, and there is no true Peace without Sanctification. The like you meet with in *Rom.* xiv. 17. *The Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink*, conſiſts not in any Legal Obſervances) *But Righteouſneſs and Peace*, to which is added, *Joy in the Holy Ghoſt* as the Reſult of theſe latter. We ſee then, that the Peace I have been ſpeaking of, muſt not be abſtracted from *Holineſs*. There is a Peace and Unity among the vileſt and worſt Perſons: *Herod* and *Pilate* were a ſort of Peace-makers: They ſhook Hands and were ſworn Friends, that they might be firm Enemies againſt Chriſt. Therefore this is to be remembred, that when we make Peace with Men, we ought to be careful that we do not war with Heaven and fight againſt God, notwithſtanding the ſpecious Airs of Peace and Concord. Peace and Friendſhip muſt be founded on Religion and Goodneſs. We muſt obſerve the Connection of theſe two Beatitudes, *Bleſſed are the Pure in Heart*, and *Bleſſed are the Peace-makers*. It is no Chriſtian Peace if it be divided from Purity and Sanctity. The evangelical Peace muſt ever be accompanied with real Goodneſs and a godly Life.

AND thus having laid down the neceſſary *Caution*, I am to exhort to the Practice of the Duty. And here I will make uſe of theſe following Motives to excite and perſwade to it.

THE firſt is the *particular Bleſſedneſs* which attends thoſe that love Peace, *they ſhall be, and they ſhall be called the Children of God*. This is a ſufficient Encouragement to the Duty: Here is a Priviledge, than which you cannot deſire a greater. Let the World *call you* what they pleaſe (and you may be ſure they will not ſpare to reproach you): One perhaps will ſtile you Buſy-bodies and Men of Contention, even when you labour moſt for Peace, you act out of your Sphere, and trouble your Heads with Matters that are alien to you: Another will ſay you are Malicious, and that all you do is out of Envy and ill Will, and with a Deſign to change the preſent Conſtitution. A Third will condemn you as Partial, and ſay you have a ſecret Reſerve for one Side only. Thus you will not be allow'd a good Word for all your Endeavours of Peace. Nay, if their Tongues were the only Weapons they would uſe, it were tolerable: It is likely you may meet with worſe Uſage from their *Hands*, when you ſtep into part and reconcile differing Men, as it happens oftentimes in Frays. That of an ancient Writer of the Church proves true, *whoſoever he be that is a Peace-maker, and adviſes to Moderation, is evily treated, being either ſcorn'd or ſtruck at.

BUT comfort your ſelves with this, you that are the Sons of Peace, that you are alſo the Children of God. All the reproachful Names that others throw upon you, can't make you ſo contemptible, as this Favour of being call'd the Children of God will make you Honourable. Take Courage, O peaceable Chriſtian, who laboureſt like *Moſes* to appeaſe and reconcile thy *ſtriving* Brethren: This is thy laudable Practice, and be not diſheartned if thou art dealt with as *Moſes* was; that is, if thou art thruſt away, and rebuked by one or both of the Combatants. This ſhould not deter thee, for God appointed thee a Peace-maker, and thy Office is Honourable and Noble: So one aſſures us who was a great Prince, and knew very well what belong'd to Titles of Honour; *It is* (ſaith he) *an Honour for a Man to ceaſe from Strife*, Pro. xx. 3. And there is we ſee, this particular Honour annexed to it, *to be called the Sons of God*: Which in the Heraldry of Heaven is of the higheſt Account.

BUT beſides the Motive in the Text, let it be conſider'd in the Second Place, that we cannot diſcover the true Goſpel Spirit, the right Evangelical Temper by any thing more than by being Peace-makers. And this will appear from ſuch Conſideration as theſe,

1. THE Prophets of old did foretell, that the times of the Goſpel ſhould be times of Peace. The Meſſiah is ſtiled *the Prince of Peace*, Iſai. ix. 7. and it follows *v.* 8. *of the increaſe of his Government and Peace*, (that is, his peaceable Government) *there ſhall be no End*. The ſame Prophet ſpeaking of the Goſpel Diſpenſation, ſaith, that *they ſhall then turn their Swords into Plow-ſhares, and their Spears into Pruning-hooks. Nation ſhall not lift up Sword againſt Nation, neither ſhall they learn War any more*, Iſa. xi. 6. *&c.* The Peaceableneſs of Chriſt's Kingdom is further deſcrib'd in his xxxii. 17, 18 Verſes. And that admirable Promiſe in *Jer.* xxxii. 39. *I will give you one Heart and one Way*, is to be fulfilled under the Goſpel. And I will conclude this Particular with that other gracious Promiſe

* Ὅσον δ᾽ εἰρηνικόν τε ϗ μέσον ὑπ᾽ ἀμφοτέρων πάσχει κακῶς, ἢ καταφρονούμενον ἢ ϗ πολεμούμενον. Greg. Naz. Orat. 14.

miſe in *Zeph.* iii. 9. *All the People ſhall call on the Name of the Lord, and ſerve him with one Conſent,* which is the Reſult of a loving and peaceable Spirit. Though the actual Accompliſhment of theſe Propheſies be not yet ſeen in the World, yet theſe Predictions acquaint us in the mean time what the Goſpel tends to. If we would put its excellent Rules in practice, we ſhould by a real Experiment find that it effectually conduces to Peace and Tranquility, as it inſpires Mens Minds with Meekneſs, Gentleneſs and Patience, as it corrects their froward Temper, their perverſe Diſpoſition, and revengeful Inclinations, as it dictates Charity, good Will, and brotherly Affection, as it extirpates the brutiſh Nature, and ingrafts a kind, ſoft, and obliging Spirit, and alſo as it fills the Soul with calm and ſerene Thoughts amidſt all Storms and Tempeſts, all Calamities and Outrages that happen in the World. This is the *genuine Tendency* of the Goſpel; thence we learn what excellent Principles and Inclinations the Chriſtian Religion doth naturally inſpire Men with. Chriſtianity dictates Peace, and would always actually promote it, if the Luſts of Men did not hinder it.

2. IT was Chriſt's Deſign in coming into the World to make Peace, or as it is expreſs'd in *Zachary*'s Prophecy, *Luke* i. 79. *To guide our Feet into the way of Peace.* The Meſſiah came to make an Agreement between the incenſed Majeſty of Hea-and the ſinful Race of *Adam*. And not only between God and Man, but between Man and Man; namely, by taking away all Diſtinctions and Differences of Nations, which cauſed great Feuds before: Which was done by calling all Perſons to the Communion of the Chriſtian Church, and thereby ſuperſeding thoſe Animoſities and Antipathies which were kept up before this Union was made. *Jews* and *Gentiles*, *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, Bond and Free, and all Conditions and Degrees of Men are one in Chriſt.

3. NOTHING is more ſeriouſly inculcated and urged upon us in the Evangelical Law, than the Duty I'm now treating of, which is no ſmall Evidence of what I am proving; yea, and all the other Duties and Exerciſes of the Chriſtian Religion look this way, and effectually tend to the promoting of Peace, It is the Conceſſion even of that ſort of Men who count themſelves witty in being Atheiſts, and denying the Truth of the Chriſtian Inſtitution, that this very Inſtitution is very fit and ſerviceable for advancing Peace and Quiet in the World, they grant that the Rules and Precepts of it conduce very much to a State of Tranquility. It it ſomething that our Religion can have ſo good a Word from theſe Men it muſt certainly deſerve Praiſe, if this Rank of People commend it. But the Truth is ſo evident and plain, that it cannot be denied: The whole Scheme and Model of Chriſtianity is fram'd and contriv'd for the promoting of Peace. I might go thro' the ſeveral Branches of it, thro' the whole Circle of its Offices, and ſhew that this is their Center. Every thing in the Chriſtian Religion hath ſome Subſervency to Unity, and Peace, and brotherly Communion. The whole Chriſtian Inſtitution is purpoſely contrived for this very End: The whole Scheme and Model of it are calculated for this Meridian, for the Inhabitants of this Temperate Clime. Chriſt was the Author of that Religion, which is really productive of Peace and Quiet, and he himſelf was the great Pattern and Example of theſe. Was it not he that was ſung into the World with that angelical and joyful Hymn, *On Earth Peace, good Will towards Men?* Was it not he that profeſs'd his *Kingdom not to be of this World*, and therefore would not contend, ſtrive, and ſuffer his Diſciples to fight? Who was it but this Founder of Chriſtianity that willingly paid his Tribute-money to *Cæſar*, and wrought a Miracle to do it, yea though he was abſolutely obliged to it. But this he did becauſe he would avoid all Occaſions of Quarrel and Strife, and teach us all to be of compliant Spirits, of peaceable and yielding Tempers. Who was it but he that ſnibb'd the too fiery Zeal of thoſe Diſciples, who would preſently be calling for Vengeance from Heaven upon thoſe who refuſed to entertain them? In a Word, who but this ſame Jeſus conſtituted the evangelical Oeconomy, which is framed and faſhion'd in all its ſeveral Parts for the promoting of a laſting Peace?

4. THIS was the Badge of the Primitive Saints, as the ſacred Hiſtory acquaints us, *Acts* ii. 44. *All that believed were together*, they were * *all one*, as the Original denotes, they were of one entire Society, and were not divided into different Parties. Again, *Acts* iv. 32. *The Multitude of them that believed were of one Heart and one Soul.* And the Chriſtians that ſucceeded theſe were taken Notice of for their peaceable converſing with one another, and for their mutual Love and Har-

* Ἐις τὸ ἀυτὸ.

mony. This was the excellent Spirit for which the Chriſtians of the firſt and pureſt Ages were ſo famous.

And thus from theſe Conſiderations it appears, that *Peace-making* is one Character of the *Evangelical Spirit*, and is an Argument of the true Genius of Chriſtianity. If therefore you ſee Men vexatious and quarrelſome, ſtirring up their Neighbours to Feuds and Animoſities, as if the Spirit of common Barretry ſeized on them, you may without Breach of Charity pronounce them to be void of the Goſpel Spirit. If you ſee Men given to fighting, and contending, conclude them to be no true Chriſtians, to be no true Diſciples and Followers of the Prince of Peace. *Mars* and *Bellona* are not the Deities that we profeſs to ſerve.

Thirdly, **Another** Motive to the Practiſe of this Duty is, that thoſe who are of a peaceable Spirit, are the fitteſt Perſons to work good upon others, and to receive Advantage from them again. Then and only then our Attempts are wont to prove ſucceſsful for the Converſion of others, and the ſpiritual Good of our own Souls, when we are employ'd in the one and the other with peaceable and loving Minds. Obſervable therefore is that of *Theophylact* on the Text, “ The *Peace-makers (ſaith he) are they who by their Doctrine “ Convert the Enemies of God, and are inſtrumental in bringing Sinners to be reconciled to the Offended Majeſty of Heaven”. But this cannot be better effected than by a peaceable Spirit, both in the Perſon who undertakes to win others to Holineſs, and in thoſe who are to be wrought upon: No Counſel no Advice, can prevail upon us whilſt we baniſh the cool and peaceable Temper, which fits us to receive the Communications of Grace, and to ſhare in the Gifts and Endowments of our Brethren, This is the beſt Soil for Holineſs to grow and flouriſh in, according to that of St. *James*, *The Fruit of Righteouſneſs is ſown in Peace of them that make Peace*, ch. iii. ver. 18. In ſhort the Sons of Peace are the fitteſt Perſons to receive Bleſſings from God, and they are the fitteſt to derive Bleſſings upon others.

And then I may adjoyn this alſo, to prove the Uſefulneſs of Peace, in order to doing good upon Men; namely, that this commends Religion to the World, and thereby renders it more eaſy to be embraced. What is there imaginable that can ſet off Chriſtianity with greater Advantage? What is there that can give a greater Luſtre to our Profeſſion? How attractive, How raviſhing is this Excellency? This if any thing will cauſe the worſt Men to think well of Chriſtianity. Did this loving and peaceable Diſpoſition prevail more on Mens Minds, and rule in their Hearts, the happy and joyful Effects of it would commend Religion to the World, and gain more Proſelytes every Day. Thus I have briefly diſplay'd the Excellency and Uſefulneſs of this Grace. I might have ſuggeſted ſeveral other Motives, but I hope theſe which I have offer'd will prevail with you to love it entirely, and to proſecute it with your utmoſt Endeavours.

In the laſt Place, I ſhall add ſome uſeful *Directions* in order to the practiſing this excellent Grace: The more general one is this, pray inceſſantly for this peaceable and loving Spirit. It is God alone that can confer this Bleſſing upon you, it is he that *maketh Men to be of one Mind in a Houſe*; yea, and in a Kingdom and Church. He it is that extirpates out of Mens Minds all Strife and all thoſe vile Affections, which are the Fuel of Quarrels and Diviſions; he ſmooths the Roughneſs, and ſoftens the hardneſs of Men's Tempers, and inſpires them with mild and gentle Inclinations, and ſweetly breathes into their Breaſts a love of Peace and Order. This is the happy Influence of that Divine Power which makes *the Wolf lie down with the Lamb*, which cauſes the moſt wild and ſavage Perſons to lay aſide their brutiſh Nature, to forget their Fierceneſs and Cruelty, and to hearken to the Dictates of Peace. Thus being convinced of the true Author of this excellent Grace, beg of him that he would work it effectually in you, that he would infuſe into you a peaceable and quiet Spirit, that he would grant you to *be like-minded one towards another*, and that you may diſcover nothing in your Actions but friendly Compliance and Amity.

The more *particular and proper Directions* are ſuch as theſe,

1. **That** you may be true Peace-makers, avoid *Hypocriſy* and *Diſſimulation*. Be ſincere in your Converſe and Dealing, for there can be no ſurer Foundation of Chriſtian Peace than this. The Apoſtle makes mention in his Deſcription of the whole Armour of God) of the *Girdle of Truth*: This will faſten and unite us cloſe to one another, this will help us to keep the Unity *of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*.

See

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* Εἰρηνοποιοὶ δὲ εἰσὶ ϗ οἱ διὰ διδασκαλίας τοὺς ἐχθροὺς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιστρέφοντες.

See then that you be hearty and upright, for this is the Way to a laſting Peace. Diſſembling will ſoon break out into Diſſention, Men all the while acting but a Part, and ſeeming to be what really they are not. This muſt needs end at laſt in Miſtakes and Miſunderſtandings, and conſequently in Diviſion.

2. **Shun** *Idleneſs*, and be diligent in the *Employment* which Providence hath allotted you. St. *Paul*'s Exhortation to the *Theſſalonians* runs thus, *Study to be quiet*, and the Way to effect it is ſuggeſted in the next Words, *Do your own Buſineſs*, *and work with your own Hands*, 1 Theſſ. iv. 11. For thoſe that are *Idle*, you may obſerve, are *moſt Buſy*, and forward to ſow the Seeds of Strife. They that do not their own Buſineſs, will be hindring of others from doing theirs. They that work not with their Hands, will, it is likely, uſe them to a bad purpoſe; that is, lift them up againſt their Brethren. There will be but little Unity ſo long as Men are Over-buſy and Pragmatical, ſo long as they intermeddle in thoſe Affairs which concern them not. Chriſtianity bids every Man keep within the Limits of his own Calling; it appoints every Man his proper Station and peculiar Sphere to act in; it condemns thoſe who intrench on others Employment. Let us then conſcientiouſly ſerve God in our ſeveral Callings, and we ſhall find that to be very inſtrumental unto the procuring of Peace.

3. **Stifle** all groundleſs *Suſpicions* and *Jealouſies* which an inventive Brain is ready to ſuggeſt. The Apoſtle tells us, that *Charity thinketh no evil*; that is, doth not cauſeleſly ſuſpect, or judge the worſt of our Brethren. It was the contrary which the Heathen Powers were guilty of towards the Chriſtians of old, they perſecuted them for no other Fault but their * meer Name. They impeach'd them for being *Chriſtians*; that was enough, the reſt was to be made out by Surmiſes. In a Word, they were ſtrangely jealous of that ſort of Men, and that dictated monſtrous things concerning them.

* *Nullum criminis nomen niſi nominis crimen.* Tertul. Apol.

4. **By** no Means liſten either to *Flatterers* or *Backbiters*. Not to the former, for they will for their own Advantage whiſper any thing into your Ears: Not to the latter, for their Buſineſs is to foment Quarrels by aſperſing and vilifying others. *Pro.* xxvi. 20. *Where no Wood is, the Fire goeth out*; *ſo where there is no Tale-bearer, the Strife ceaſeth.* An excellent and uſeful Proverb in the Life of Man, and nothing is more conducing to Peace. As you deſire to promote this, take not up falſe Reports concerning your Brethren: Make the beſt Conſtruction of Mens Words and Actions, judge favourably and fairly of things, and remember how loth we are that others ſhould cenſure us.

5. **Mortify** your Affections to the *World*, and all extravagant Deſires of ſecular Profit and Advantage, for theſe are the Springs of moſt of the Quarrels and Combuſtions in the World. *The Love of Money*, which is *the Root of all Evil*, is more eſpecially and ſignally the Riſe of *this*. Many chooſe to ſail on troubled Waters and boiſterous Seas, that they may raiſe themſelves upon the Billows. If you conſult *Acts* xix. 23, 24. you will ſee that the Cauſe of that great Uproar mentioned there, was *the Silver Shrines of Diana, which brought no ſmall Gain to the Craftſmen.* Look then to this, let not the worldly Intereſt betray you to an unſettled and unquiet Condition: Endeavour to eradicate that which ſo often proves the Root of Diſſention and Diviſion, and cauſes Men to abandon the Laws of Chriſtian Peace.

6. **There** is †nothing more oppoſite to the true Peace-making Spirit then *Envy*; therefore reckon it your Task to baniſh this quite out of your Breaſts. An envious Perſon grudges at another's Good and Welfare, and he always perſwades himſelf that it diminiſhes his Good and Happineſs. This is the Man who is ſick, becauſe others are well, who pines away, becauſe he ſees his Neighbour proſper. Now he that is haunted with this Fiend, muſt needs be of a contentious and quarrelſome Temper, and be always taking Occaſion to do Miſchief; *Where this envying is, there is Strife and Confuſion, and every evil Work*, Jam. iii. 16.

* *Nihil eſt tam pronum ad ſimultates quàm Æmulatio.* Plin.

7. **Let** me add this as another moſt importent Direction; namely, that you lay in a large Stock of *Humility*, of *Meekneſs* and *Self-denial.* Mind the Connection of the Apoſtle's Words, *Eph.* iv. 2, 3. *I beſeech you*, (ſaith he) *walk worthy of your Vocation, with all Lowlineſs and Meekneſs, with Long-ſuffering, forbearing one another in Love, endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.* As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, If you would keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, you muſt be endowed with a Spirit of Lowlineſs and Meekneſs, and with ſuch Graces as include in them Humbleneſs of Mind. Wherefore often call to Mind

that excellent Advice of the ſame Apoſtle, *Phil.* ii. 3. *Let nothing be done through Strife and Vain-glory, but in Lowlineſs of Mind let each eſteem other better than themſelves:* And in *Rom.* xii. 16. *Be of the ſame Mind one towards another, mind not high things, but condeſcend to Men of low Eſtate: Be not wiſe in your own Conceits*; and then it follows, *If it be poſſible, and as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all Men.* You will find there is an Impoſſibility of living peaceably with all Men, if you entertain high Thoughts of yourſelves. Be ſure therefore to lay your Foundation in Humility. This is the Grace that accompanies Concord and Unity, *by this we enjoy great Quietneſs*, by this we bring ourſelves and others to a ſteady and compoſed Poſture. This is the Grace that makes a Man *not to think more highly of himſelf than he ought to think, but to think ſoberly, accordingly as God hath dealt to every Man the Meaſure of Faith*, Rom. xii. 3. this makes him ſenſible of his own Failings, and it inclines him to be favourable to others, when they fail either in Knowledge or Practice. Thus in the very Nature of the thing it ſelf it muſt needs be that *Humility* is the Mother of *Peace.*

WHEREAS on the other Side, *Pride* is a Make-bate, and hath a Hand in all or moſt of the Diſſentions in the World. For the proud Man hath an exceſſive eſteem of himſelf, and vaunts of his Excellencies above others, and will ſuffer, no Man to diſparage him. He is very much concern'd for a Name an Reputation, and is big with Ambition and Vain glory. He ſhuts his Eyes at other Mens Excellencies, as well as at his own Weakneſſes and Miſcarriages. He would have the good Word of all Men, but refuſes to ſpeak well of any: Now, ſuch a Perſon muſt needs be indiſpoſed for Peace; yea, rather he is fit to be an Incendiary, and can ſerve to no other Uſe than to blow up the Coals of Diſſention, and to ſet the World together by the Ears. *Only by Pride cometh Contention*, ſaith the wiſe Man, *Prov.* xiii. 10. this alone of itſelf, without any other Help, is able to raiſe Diviſions and Quarrels. Endeavour then for an humble Spirit, think lowly of your own Acquirements, eſteem others better than your ſelves, do not make your own Excellencies the ſole Standard of Worth. Take down the Top-ſail of Pride; for it is that which carries ſo great a Wind and Storm with it; your only Way to allay it is by being humble.

8. IF you would be of the Number of the *Bleſſed Peace-makers*, you muſt look to the Government of your *Tongues.* Here how this Member is decipher'd by St. *James*, *It is a Fire, and that which ſets on Fire the whole Courſe of Nature, and is itſelf ſet on Fire of Hell; it is a World of Iniquity; it is a Beaſt that no Man can tame, an unruly Evil, full of deadly Poiſon.* But by the Grace of God effectually influencing on the Heart, this Beaſt may be cured, this Fire may be quench'd, this unruly Member may receive Correction, this Poiſon may be expell'd. And Peace and brotherly Agreement will be the happy Effect of this Change; for as the wiſe Man hath obſerved in *Prov.* xv. 1. *A ſoft Anſwer turneth away Wrath, but grievous Words Stir up Strife.* Let us then lay aſide all exaſperating Language, and with the Mildneſs and Softneſs of our Words prevent Diviſion and Diſſention.

9. IF you would be of the Number of the Peace-makers, take care to ſuppreſs all undue *Anger*, and let not the Sun go down on your Wrath. The cholerick Man, who ſuffers his Paſſion to prevail over his Reaſon, is always unquiet and turbulent: This is he that not only torments himſelf but others and is reckon'd as a common Diſturber of the Neighbourhood. If you would therefore avoid ſuch an Imputation as this, obſerve the Apoſtle's Words, *Rom.* xii. 18, &c. *If it be poſſible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all Men: Dearly beloved, avenge not yourſelves, but rather give Place unto Wrath: Be not overcome of Evil, but overcome Evil with Good*, He ſets down the Duty, and then preſcribes the way to it. If you would live peaceably, put away all Bitterneſs, Wrath and Anger, overcome Evil with Good, be meek and placid, be patient and gentle towards all. This is the true Method of Chriſtian Peace-making.

Laſtly, YOU muſt not only ſuppreſs Anger, but all other inordinate Paſſions, and you muſt by all Means endeavour to mortify your corrupt Nature, and to be truly Religious and Pious; for *Religion* is the ſtrongeſt Tye and Bond of Peace. If Societies of Men or individual Perſons are ſo happy as to unite in the Fear of God, they lay a Foundation for Peace and Agreement in all things elſe. * The Love of God conciliates a Love and Benevolence among Men. † Piety toward God is the moſt effectual Charm, and the moſt indiſſoluble Bond of mutual Love and good Will. So that if Men be fixed here, that is, on the Baſis of Religion, they cannot be ſevered and diſ-jointed by any thing elſe, they cannot but enjoy a laſting Peace. It is certain that Man had never broke the Peace with his Fellow-Creatures, unleſs he had at firſt been at odds with his Creator. It is the Effect of our apoſtatizing from God, that we jar and fall out among ourſelves. The State of Nature is a State of War, in another Senſe than the modern Philoſopher meant it. *We are by Nature the Children of Wrath*, and yet in another Senſe too than the Apoſtle meant it. We carry the Seeds of Anger and Diſſention in our depraved Natures. Hence are thoſe Feuds and Debates that are ſo frequent in the World. The effectual Way then to attain to the excellent Accompliſhment of the Text, is to apply ourſelves with great Diligence to the mortifying our Luſts, and rectifying our corrupt Nature, and endeavouring to be truly Good and Vertuous. Let the Divine Grace bear ſway in our Souls, and give Laws to our unbridled Affections, and take on it the Empire of our ſtubborn and rebellious Wills. If this take full Poſſeſſion of our Souls, and enthrone it ſelf there, we ſhall find all calm and ſerene, and a perfect Diſpoſition to advance and cultivate Peace with all Men.

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* Τὸ μέγιστον εἰς φιλανθρωπίαν ϗ οἰκειότατον θεοφιλὲς ἦθος, Philo de Charitate.

† Φίλτρον ἀνυσιμώτατον ϗ δεσμὸς ἄλυτος εὐνοίας ἐρωτικῆς ἡ τοῦ ἑνὸς θεοῦ τιμή. Idem de Monarchiâ.

AN
APPENDIX to the Diſcourſe
ON
Bleſſed are the PEACE-MAKERS.

Shewing how this is Reconcileable with

MATT. X. 10.

Think not that I am come to ſend Peace upon Earth: I came not to ſend Peace, but a Sword.

IF you look abroad into the World, it is a very melancholy and diſmal Proſpect, to ſee at this Day ſo many Kingdoms and Countries concern'd in War and Hoſtilities, and vigorouſly carrying on the Deſigns of Blood and Slaughter.

BUT it is yet more diſmal and amazing to ſee *Peace* abandoned, and the *Sword* taken up, drawn out, and wielded by People and Nations who profeſs themſelves to be *Chriſtians*, and in that own themſelves to belong to the Prince of Peace.

BUT it is ſtill *more* ſtrange and ſurprizing, that the Text before us ſeems to *give Countenance* and *Approbation* to this affrighting Scene of War and Slaughter which we have before our Eyes. *Think not that I am come to ſend Peace*, &c.

IF you were not acquainted with the Context, and with the Bleſſed Author of this Paſſage, which I have now read again unto you, you might juſtly, upon my rehearſing of it, break out into ſuch Language as this, who is this, that ſo boldly bids defiance to the World, and breathes out nothing but Violence and Cruelty? What Enemy of Mankind is this, that thus threateneth us with War and woful Hoſtilities? Is not this the Stile of ſome *Roman* Emperor? May not *Nero* or *Diocleſian*, or ſome ſuch Man of Blood, who delights wholy in Murders and Maſſacres, be ſuſpected to be the Author of this affrighting Language? Or doth it not ſavour of the Genius of that *Arabian* Prophet, who was for propagating his Religion by the Sword, and intended that his Succeſſors ſhould maintain it by Force and Violence, by Ravage and all ſorts of Outrages? Or doth not this ſound like the Language of the great Ravager of this Age, whoſe martial Dialect is *Fire* and *Sword?* Who elſe ſhould it be that comes thus into the World, upon ſo unwelcome an Errand, as to make Havock in it, and will by no Means hear of Peace, and Friendly Compliance, but fills our Ears with Wars, and alarms us with *Swords* and *Fire?* For even *this* mercileſs Element is mention'd in that dreadful Comment upon the Text, *Luke* xii. 49. *I am come to ſend Fire on the Earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?* And again, Ver. 51. *Suppoſe ye, that I am come to give Peace on Earth? I tell you, nay, but rather Diviſion.* As the *Sword* and *Fire* (for they are the * ſame) denote War and Slaughter, and Perſecution, ſo *Diviſion* may refer, it is probable, to the Feuds and Quarrels between *Chriſtians* and *Infidels*, occaſion'd by the propagating of the *Goſpel*; and it includes not only the *Domeſtick Diſſentions* (of which the next Verſe ſpeaks) but the *Publick* ones between *Chriſtians* and *Chriſtians*, which ſhall happen in the World.

* *So the Hebr.* Lahat *ſignifies the* Edge of the Sword *and a* Flame, *The Gr.* δαίειν, *ſignifies* to burn *and* to divide.

THUS you ſee all things are far from Peace and Unity: We hear of nothing but *Swords, Fire* and *Diviſion.* And now will it ever be gueſs'd that our Bleſſed Saviour was the Perſon who ſaid he *came to ſend* all theſe? Can theſe be the Words of the Prince of Peace, and him that in his Sermon on the Mount, among other *Beatitudes*, gives us this ſignal one, *Bleſſed are the Peace-makers.* Would he ſtile them ſo, and yet be himſelf a Make-bate, an Enemy to Peace, a common Incendiary? Is it poſſible to conceive that the Holy Jeſus, the *Saviour* of the World is become a *Deſtroyer?* Is the Chriſtian *Croſs* ſet up as a Standard of War? Inſtead of Prayers and Tears, are Fire and Sword the Churches Weapons? As if by Chriſt Jeſus, the Angel of the Covenant, a flaming Sword was brandiſh'd all over Chriſtendom, like that at the Entrance of Paradiſe. Doth he that commanded St. *Peter to put up his Sword* (even then, when he drew it in his Maſter's Defence; and at a time when there ſeem'd to be the greateſt need of it) now give a Commiſſion to draw it out, and do Execution with it, and that not *to cut off an Ear* only, but to ſlaughter whole Bodies Politick, and to ſubvert Kingdoms and Common-wealths?

OR, what is it that this Text means? Are Chriſtians of a quarrelſome and wrangling Temper, are they cholerick and paſſionate above other Men? Are they to be reckon'd in the Number of thoſe ſavage Beaſts, which fall not with others into any Herd? Or, are they bid here to break up humane Society, and to declare for Diſorder and Confuſion? Did their Maſter lead them into the Field, and encourage them to fight, and give the Word of Command, when he ſaid, *I came not to ſend Peace, but a Sword?* Who can believe, that hath any kindneſs for the Chriſtian Religion, that Chriſt here iſſues out any Letters of Mart, or gives the ſignal to engage the Enemy, or furniſhes us with Weapons to diſturb the World? No ſuch Matter: For then even *Hecuba*'s Dream of old, would ſeem to have been verified in the *Bleſſed Virgin* Mary, that ſhe was deliver'd of a Firebrand,, a *Boutefeu*, a common Miſchief and Calamity. And in all the Followers and Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, the Fable of the Breed of *Dragon*'s *Teeth*, which ſprung up, firſt biting, then devouring one another, would too truly be moraliz'd; and that Interrogatory might not be put amiſs to them,

—— *Tantæne animis Cœleſtibus Iræ?*

Hath any thing, that pretends ſo much to Heaven and a better World, ſo much Gall, Bitterneſs and bad Nature reſiding in it, and over-ruling it? How then ſhall we ſolve this Difficulty that is before us? How ſhall we reconcile what is ſaid of the peaceable Kingdom of Chriſt, with that which we have here from the Mouth of Chriſt himſelf, *Think not that I am come to ſend Peace upon Earth: I came not to ſend Peace, but a Sword?*

THIS is certain in general, that there are no real *Contradictions* in the Word of God. There may be found in the Writings of the beſt Men, Slips and Failings; but the Holy Scripture inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt, the Spirit of Truth, cannot be liable to any ſuch thing. This we muſt be forc'd to lay down as a ſure Groundwork: And all the Wit and Art of Man cannot ſhake it Having ſaid this in general, I come now particularly and diſtinctly to explain our Saviour's Words, and conſequently to reconcile them with thoſe Places of Scripture, which ſeem ſo much to vary from them. I will diſpatch all I have to ſay in theſe three following Heads,

Firſt, FOR the better Solution of the premiſed Difficulty, and the clearer underſtanding our Saviour's Meaning, we are to obſerve that theſe Words, are an obviating of a fond Fancy and Conceit of the Diſciples (and indeed of all the *Jews)* concerning the *Meſſias*, and his Kingdom. They verily thought (as might be evidenc'd from ſeveral Paſſages in the Evangelical Hiſtory) that Chriſt ſhould reign as ſome great Monarch upon Earth, as ſome uncontroulable King or Emperor, and therefore that their Condition ſhould be gay and proſperous, that they eſpecially who were adopted to be *Apoſtles*, ſhould be great Minions and Favourites, and be ſure not to miſs Preferment at Court. This Perſwaſion prevail'd ſo powerfully upon them for a time, that it viſibly and apparently diſcover'd it ſelf in many of their Actions, inſomuch that though our Saviour had ſaid enough at ſeveral times to baffle this Opinion, yet he was forc'd at laſt to deal roundly with them, and in plainer Terms to tell them, that *He was not come to ſend Peace, but a Sword.* As if he had ſaid, you that are my Followers and Diſciples, deceive not your ſelves with ſuch Thoughts as theſe, *viz.* that the Deſign of my coming into the World, is to ſecure to you and all Chriſtians a perpetual Enjoyment of worldly Abundance, Quiet and Proſperity upon Earth, that you ſhall reign with me as Kings in outward Pomp and Glory, and be wholly excuſed from Troubles and Calamities. But *rather* reckon before-hand upon Perſecution as your Portion and Allotment; for as long as there are Devils and wicked Men, you will be the Objects of their Envy, Hatred, and Malice. Know this, that for your exemplary Lives and Converſations, for your free reproving of the Sinful World, for your diſcountenancing of all Vice and Immorality, for your encouraging and promoting of all vertuous and laudable Deſigns, for your Perſeverance and Conſtancy in your Chriſtian Profeſſion, for theſe things you muſt ſuffer from the Tongues of vicious Men, whoſe *Tongues are Swords and Spears* as the Pſalmiſt ſtiles them). And you ſhall find that they have Hands, as well as Tongues, and though you ſtand upon your Guard never ſo well, and warily, they'll reach you at one time or other; and then if you are not in *all* Points miſchiev'd by them, you muſt attribute it not to their want of Will, but Power. I aſſure you of this, (and it can't be long before you are aſcertain'd of it by your own Experience) that the World will hate you with a deadly Hatred, they will conſpire and plot your Deſtruction, they will by all Arts and Methods endeavour to clear this Earth of you. So far is Chriſtianity from guarding you from your Enemies, and defending you from their *Swords*, that it will expoſe you to them, and thruſt you upon them. Thus *I came not to ſend Peace, but a Sword*, i.e. Suffering and Perſecution.

Secondly, THAT we may have right Apprehenſions concerning theſe Words, and ſee how fairly they are reconcileable with the Prophecies in the *Old Teſtament* concerning the Kingdom of Chriſt, it muſt be remembred that thoſe Places are not *wholy* to be underſtood of outward and worldly Peace, Succeſs, and Proſperity but of inward Peace and Serenity of Mind. Thoſe Texts are a lively Character of the Power of Chriſt's Goſpel upon Men's Hearts. Under the Evangelical Diſpenſation, they ſhall by the Energy and Efficacy of the Word, be brought to lay aſide their Reſiſtances and Rebellions againſt God, and the Hoſtilities againſt themſelves. The piercing and wounding of their own Souls ſhall find a happy Period. Thus their *Swords ſhall be turn'd into Plow-ſhares, and their Spears into Pruning-hooks*, as the Learned Dr. *Hammond* in his Sermon on that Text of *Iſaiah* expounds it. As we ſee that the ſame Metal which juſt now was a Sword, having ſuffered ſome Change by the Fire and Anvil, comes out new-forg'd in another Shape; ſo the ſame Powers and Faculties of the Soul, which were before actuated by Satan, and *made Weapons of Unrighteouſneſs*, being now renew'd and transform'd by the efficacious Influence and Operation of the Holy Spirit, they become *Inſtruments of Righteouſneſs*, and wholy ſubſervient to God's Glory. This happy Change, which brings *Spiritual Peace* with it, may rationally be thought to be intended in thoſe Prophecies: though we muſt *not exclude* outward and temporal Peace. *This* without Doubt was *partly* meant in thoſe famous Predictions: And accordingly we are told, that there was a total Ceſſation from War, and an univerſal Peace at Chriſt's coming into the World: Then *Janus*'s Temple was ſhut, which was a Sign of a Catholick Reſpoſe. But tho' this at that time was enough to make good the Prophecies concerning outward Peace; yet alas! this Bleſſing continued a very little time: And Chriſt that was born in a peaceable Seaſon, had ſcarce an Hour of Peace after he began to appear in the World. And as for his Followers, they were the only Perſons that then and afterwards lay open to Contempt, Affronts, and Injuries, and violent Death. But in the mean time they poſſeſſed their Souls in Patience, they were happy in the unutterable Pleaſures and Raviſhments of a good Conſcience, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt: They had an uninterrupted Peace and Serenity of Mind, they were bleſſed with Succeſs in their preaching the Goſpel, and propagating the Chriſtian Faith. The Doctrine of Jeſus was eagerly embrac'd, and innumerable Proſelytes were gain'd to the beſt Religion; and theſe were the Bleſſings, which were predicted and promiſed by that Evangelical Prophet.

Thirdly, THAT which is the great (and might be the only) Solution of the Doubt is this, that *Chriſt* indeed *came* (as he here ſaith) *to ſend a Sword*; but this *occaſionally* and *accidentally*: For he did not directly intend, or primarily deſign any ſuch thing. Theſe Words then of Chriſt are to be underſtood as thoſe in *John* ix. 39. *I am come into this World for Judgment*; i. e. the *Event* of my Coming will be that thoſe who obſtinately continue in their Sins, notwithſtanding the Tenders of Grace and Life, ſhall be juſtly condemned, and doom'd to Miſery; but this is not my direct End: As he ſaith in *John* iii. 17 *God ſent not his Son into the World to condemn the World*, and *John* xii 47. *I came not to judge the World.* You hear what our Saviour ſaith, he came to *judge the World*, and he came *not to judge the World.* In ſuch a different Senſe he came *to ſend a Sword*; and he came not *to ſend a Sword.* That is, it was Accidental and not by Deſign that he ſent it. So the Apoſtles, and the Goſpel it ſelf preach'd by them, are ſaid to be *to ſome the Savour of Death unto Death*, 2 Cor. ii. 16. whereas the *proper End* and *Deſign* of the Goſpel is to be *the Savour of Life unto Life.* But according to the *Conſequent* or *Event*, which happens by Man's own Fault, it is the former, that is, it proves deadly and deſtructive. And ſo the *Diſobedient* ſhall be *condemned* by that Goſpel, by which the *Obedient* and *Faithful* ſhall be *ſaved.*

THUS it is here, if you have reſpect to the *Iſſue* and *Conſequence* of things, Chriſt came *not* to ſend Peace, but a Sword; though *this* was not the *End* and *Deſign* which he propounded to himſelf in his Coming into the World. You read indeed in the Verſe after my Text, that all manner of *Contention* and *Variance* betwixt the neareſt Relations and Friends, is the *Sequel* of Chriſt's Doctrine, and the publiſhing of it: But then it muſt be ſaid that this *primarily* proceeds from the wicked Genius, corrupt Nature, and evil Diſpoſitions of Men, who will not entertain ſo harmleſs and innocent a Doctrine, but are reſolv'd with all their Art and force to oppoſe it. Chriſt indeed came to ſend a Sword, but that Sword is wielded and managed by the Hands of unjuſt and cruel Men. Chriſt came to ſend a Fire, but that Fire is blown up and kindled by the Breath of Anger and Paſſion. The Fuel of it is our own vicious Nature, corrupt Manners, and inordinate Luſts. Into this it is that St. *James* reſolves all Diviſion, and Breaches of Chriſtian Peace, into theſe as the firſt Elements and Principles: *From whence come Wars and Fightings amongſt you? come they not hence? even from your Luſts, that war in your Members?* Jam. iv. 1. There is a Domeſtick or Civil War in our own Breaſts, there is a warring of Luſt in our Members, which is the Cauſe of all the Wars that are viſible abroad. Our Bleſſed Maſter bids us curb our evil Appetites and Inclinations. He hath by his Holy Rules laid a Reſtraint, an Embargo, as I may ſo ſay, upon our exorbitant Paſſions and Affections, he hath by his ſevere, but righteous Laws confined us: Now, if by this Severity ſome Men grow more looſe and wild in their Behaviour, and will not brook any Reſtraints and Confinements, if they run mad, their Swords, and ſet all on Fire, *Chriſtianity* is by no Means to be deem'd the Cauſe of this.

WE grant that the *Event* of Chriſt's Coming proves to be Diviſion and Diſquiet, as who hath not obſerv'd it in above ſixteen Centuries of Years? But all that can be ſaid is this, that the Carnality and Senſuality of Men's Hearts will oppoſe the Laws of Chriſt's Spiritual Kingdom, and thus by Accident the beſt thing is productive of ſomething which is the worſt in the World. Thus *Chriſt is a Stone of ſtumbling, and a Rock of Offence*, and is *laid* to be ſuch, *Rom.* ix. 33. but how? Not to dive here into the Nature of the Divine Decrees and Permiſſion, by which this and all other things are appointed, it is certain that it is our own Blindneſs and Obſtinacy that is the Cauſe of our *Stumbling*; it is from our voluntary Prejudices that we are offended at Chriſt and his Ways. Thus, in our preſent Caſe, Chriſt is and hath been *occaſionally*, and by Reaſon of Man's willful Perverſeneſs, the Author of War and woful Diſorders, and Chriſtianity hath bred new Quarrels in the World. The Word of God, which is called the *Sword of the Spirit*, and by the ſame inſpired Writer is compared to a *two-edg'd Sword*, is (if I may ſo call it) a *Sword of Peace*, for it cuts and wounds, only in order to cure: But this by the Corruption of Men is made a warlike and fatal Weapon, and an Inſtrument of implacable Striſe. Thus the Prophet *Jeremiah* ſaith of himſelf, that he was *born a Man of Striſe, and a Man of Contention*: Not that he was one of a quarrelſome Nature, but *others* ſhewed themſelves ſo towards him. He gave no juſt Occaſion to them, but they *took* Occaſion. His Doctrine galled the Age he lived in, and they fell upon the Prophet for his dealing ſo plainly with them. Thus the Goſpel of Chriſt meeting with the Vices of Men, is become the Occaſion of the ſharpeſt Bickerings and Digladiations, that ever were.

IT were eaſy to deſcend to ſome Particulars to illuſtrate this Matter. I will mention one, thoſe Words of our Saviour, *This is my Body*, and the whole Inſtitution and Myſtery belonging to them, have alarm'd all Chriſtendom by ſome Men's wilful miſtaking of them, and reſolving to miſtake them for their worldly Profit and Advantage. And then what will they not do, what Violence will they not uſe even to their own Faculties and common Senſe? what Forces will they not muſter up to maintain what they have ſo miſtaken, and to ſlaughter (if need be) all that oppoſe them? Is it not ſad that Chriſt's *Blood* hath been made uſe of to ſpill the *Blood* of Chriſtians, and his *Body* to be the Deſtruction of theirs? That Ordinance which was intended to unite all Chriſtians together in Communion and Love, that Sacrament which was deſign'd as the great Cement of Hearts and Affections, hath by vain Diſputes and perverſe Controverſies, been made the Occaſion of Wrath and Ill will, and more evil Actions, yea, even of the greateſt Barbarities and Outrages. And even ſo hath it fared with the Word of Truth in general, and the Miniſterial Adminiſtration of it; though in it ſelf it be of unvaluable Worth and Excellency yet by unneceſſary Diſputes and vain Janglings it hath been the Inlet to Errors and Hereſies, to Schiſm and uncharitable Animoſities. I have read that *Orpheus*'s Harp, when he himſelf play'd upon it, was moſt raviſhing and melodious, in ſo much that the Poets in a high Rant tell us, that he charm'd the wild and ſavage Beaſts with it: But then, the ſame muſical Inſtrument handled by others, was ſo far from taming, that it further enraged the Creatures that heard it, and made them fly upon the unskilful Players, and tear them in Pieces. So is it with all the Parts of the Evangelical Doctrine, in themſelves they are Sweet, Harmonious, and Raviſhing, and able to work upon the moſt brutiſh Natures; but if they be uſed unskilfully, much more if they be handled perverſly and prophanely (as they are by deceitful and heretical Teachers) they will be ſo far from adminiſtring to Peace and Harmony, that they will rather ſtir Men up to Hatred and Diſcord, and actuate their Minds with Malice and Revenge.

So then we may ſafely conclude that *Peace* was deſigned by our Saviour; and though we have not always the actual Poſſeſſion of it, yet this is no infringing of the Prophecies concerning Peace, for they declare not the *abſolute Iſſue* and *Event* of things, but what *would be the Event*, if the Principles of Chriſtianity took Place in the World and were conſcientiouſly practiſed by it's Profeſſors. Then all Wars would ceaſe, and univerſal Repoſe would bleſs the World. If Chriſtians would walk according to the Rules preſcribed in the Goſpel, they would experimentally find that the Religion, which they profeſs, is a thing that changes their Tempers, and effectually enclines them to Peace and Unity. This, I ſay is the ſhort of all, that it is not by any real Deſign of our Lord and Saviour, but by our own depraved Natures and Diſpoſitions, that *Swords* and *Fires* are brought in by the Chriſtian Religion. The Goſpel was intended as a Meſſage of Peace, and is a proper Inſtrument to effect it: But if the Event be quite contrary, it makes not at all againſt the Intention and Purpoſe of Chriſt, no more than it doth that ſo many Men laugh at Chriſtianity and true Piety, and the affectionate Senſe of Religion and the Practiſe of it, and thereby ruin and damn themſelves: Whereas the Apoſtle hath aſſured us that *God would have all Men to be ſaved.*

The great Reaſon, why the Generality of Perſons in the World find not the happy Effect of this gracious Declaration, is, becauſe they wilfully deſpiſe the Mercy and Favour of Heaven offered to them. So here, Chriſtianity was deſigned to ſweeten our Paſſions, to qualify the Harſhneſs and Sowreneſs of our Nature: The Genius of it is peaceable and loving; its innate and proper Efficacy is ſuch, that it creates good Will and Amity: But if vain Men will ſtudiouſly pervert and abuſe ſo excellent a Doctrine, Who can help it, if Fewds and Animoſities are riſe in the World? As the Caſe thus ſtands, our Saviour might rightly ſay, *I came not to ſend Peace but a Sword*, as much as if he had ſpoken theſe very Words to his Diſciples. “I ſee that my Doctrine will not take univerſally with the World; the *Jewiſh Rabbies* will hoot at it, as ſome ſtrange “Innovation; the *Gentile Philoſophers* will diſpute it, as unreaſonable; the *States-*“*Men* and *Politicians* will proſcribe it; the *Princes* and *great Ones* will trample “upon it; *Hereticks* will deprave and debauch it; *Atheiſts* will ſcoff and deride “it: And thus I ſhall be the *Occaſion* of raiſing Combuſtions and Diſturbances, “of cauſing War and Slaughter, of ſending Sword and Fire. This I tell you “of before-hand, that you may know what to truſt to; and I pray think never “the worſe of my Doctrine for all this. I may ſeem to be the Author of “Sedition and Faction; I may be thought to be an Abettor of Schiſm and “Diſſention; I may among fooliſh Men undergo this Cenſure, but I deſerve it “not; for I never deſign'd any Trouble to the World. Men have *called* it to “them, and *pull'd* it down upon them, by their own Luſts, and extravagant “Deſires. By reaſon of theſe it is, that the World is ſo bad, and will every “Day grow worſe, till the laſt Diſpenſation of the Goſpel; which ſhall preſent “the Chriſtian World with *Halcyon Days*, and a long and happy Time, of entire and uninterrupted Peace.

THIS ſhall ſuffice for the explaining and illuſtrating of theſe Words of our bleſſed Lord, and the clearing of them from all Difficulty and Ambiguity.

THE Concluſion of all ſhall be this. Let us conform ourſelves exactly to the Chriſtian Religion, and its moſt excellent Rules; in a ſpecial Manner, as it gives us the beſt Laws for conducting us into the Way of Peace and Tranquillity: Do we what we can, for the taking of Swords out of Mens Hands, for rebating the Keenneſs and Sharpneſs of their angry Paſſions, and revengeful Inclinations. Quench we therefore, as much as in us lies, by the cool and calm Principles of Chriſtianity; or if we can effect but little, let us take care that we add not Fuel to the Fire.

THE EIGHTH BEATITUDE OF *Perſecution for Righteouſneſs Sake.*

MATT. V. 10, 11, 12.

Bleſſed are they which are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs Sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Bleſſed are ye when Men ſhall revile you, and ſhall ſay all Manner of Evil againſt you falſly for my Sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven; for ſo perſecuted they the Prophets which were before you.

I AM now to treat of the laſt Beatitude, and this may ſeem, to ſome, to have more Difficulty in it, than all the reſt before mentioned: For it looks like a ſtrange Paradox, that *Perſecution* ſhould be a *Bleſſing*, that That, which is accounted the greateſt earthly Miſery, ſhould be reckoned a Happineſs. This is a *Beatitude*, which ſeems to have nothing in it that anſwers to that Name, but it brings with it the moſt unwelcome News, and, to outward Appearance, quite remote from all Felicity. But let us arreſt our Thoughts, and conſider, how unſeemly and irrational it is, to find Fault with our Saviour's moſt divine and heavenly Doctrine. If we profeſs ourſelves to be his Diſciples and Scholars, it becomes us to ſit humbly at his Feet, and not to lift up ours againſt him, not to contradict his excellent Aphoriſms, or ſo much as to ſuſpect the Truth of any Thing that he hath delivered.

IT is true, the general Vote of the World is, Bleſſed are the Rich and Wealthy, Bleſſed are they that are Preferr'd and Honour'd, Bleſſed are they that have the Applauſe and Credit of the World, Bleſſed are they that have a good Share in its Pleaſures and Delights. Thus runs the common Opinion of Men, and we are inclin'd to add our Suffrage to it. But the Matter will be decided by anſwering this one Queſtion, Whoſe Word may we give the greateſt Credit to, that of our Saviour, or that of the corrupted Multitude? Surely you will ſay to the former. Here then is the preſent Caſe, tho' the World commonly cries down the Perſecuted and Afflicted, as the moſt forlorn and miſerable Perſons, yet here in the Text, He, that is Truth itſelf, confutes that common Opinion; for this is one of his infallible Maxims, and the ſacred Inſtitution of Chriſtians muſt ever maintain it, that *Bleſſed are they which are perſecuted.*

YOU may obſerve, that there is ſome *Difference* in the Expreſſing this Beatitude, for, in the 10*th.* Verſe, it is deliver'd more largely and generally in the third Perſon, thus, Bleſſed are *they* which are perſecuted,—for *theirs* is the Kingdom of Heaven, but in the 11*th* and 12*th* Verſes, you will find that Manner of Speaking chang'd into the ſecond Perſon, [Bleſſed are *ye* when Men ſhall revile *you*, and perſecute *you*,] [Rejoice, for great is *your* Reward in Heaven.] Whereas, before our Saviour's Doctrine was directed promiſcuouſly to All; now he more eſpecially turns to his Diſciples and Followers. As if he had ſaid, I *apply* myſelf in this Diſcourſe to you: I pray take Notice that it nearly concerns you, and therefore, it is your Duty to make Application of it to yourſelves.

IN the Words, you have theſe Parts, 1. The proper Subjects of Bleſſedneſs, or the Perſons to whom the preſent Beatitude belongs, and theſe are deſcribed *firſt*, more generally in the 10*th* Verſe, *they which are perſecuted*; ſecondly, more particularly in the 11*th* Verſe, *thoſe that are reviled*, and thoſe, *of whom all Manner of Evil is ſaid.* Theſe are the Subjects of Bleſſedneſs. 2. Here is the Reſtriction or Limitation added to thoſe Subjects, in theſe Words, *for Righteouſneſs Sake*, and *falſly for my Sake.* 3. The Bleſſedneſs itſelf, and that is firſt more largely propounded, in the Front of the 10*th* and 11*th* Verſes, *Bleſſed*; ſecondly, more ſpecifically aſſerted, and that alſo doubly expreſs'd in the 10*th* Verſe, *theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*; and in this 12*th* Verſe, *great is your Reward in Heaven.* 4. Here is the Reſult of all, by Way of Duty. *Rejoice and be exceeding glad.* And laſtly, you may add the Encouragement to the Duty, which lies in this, that the foreſaid Treatment is no ſtrange Thing, it is that which all good Men have experienced, *ſo perſecuted they the Prophets which were before you.*

The Words then may be reſolved into theſe five Propoſitions,

1. It is the Allotment of good and holy Men, ſuch as are Chriſt's Followers, to ſuffer Perſecutions, to be reviled, and ſpoken Evil of. 2. Whenever we ſuffer in this Kind, we muſt be ſure that it be for Righteouſneſs ſake, and that what is alledg'd againſt us be falſe and groundleſs. 3. Thoſe, who are perſecuted and reviled for Righteouſneſs ſake, are bleſſed Perſons. 4. Though good Men ſuffer never ſo much here on Earth, they ſhall be made amends hereafter, by their Reward in Heaven. 5. The Perſons thus ſuffering for Chriſt's ſake, and who have ſo great a Reward promiſed to them, are bound to bear their Sufferings with Gladneſs and Rejoicing.

I BEGIN with the firſt Propoſition, which is this, It is the Allotment of good and holy Men, to ſuffer from the wicked World; they muſt expect to be perſecuted and defamed. Before I proceed to the handling this Doctrine, I will deſcant a while on the *Terms* which our Saviour here uſes, and they are three, *Reviling*, *Perſecuting*, *ſaying all Manner of Evil.*

As for the Firſt, *Reviling*, this is a more tolerable and milder Sort of Perſecution. They, who intend a more publick and ſevere Way of Outrage againſt the Servants of God, begin with this firſt. The Perſecution of the Tongue, that is, opprobrious Language, Slandering, Scoffing, make Way for the Perſecution of the Hand, which is here more ſignally call'd *Perſecution*, and is that ill Treatment which proceeds to open Actions.

THIS ſecond Expreſſion is look'd upon by ſome as a *Law Term*, and is thought to ſignify that Sort of Wrong and Injury, which innocent Perſons ſuffer from the Hands of the Magiſtrate and publick Authority, when they are brought before Tribunals and Judicatures, and there proſecuted and condemned, and haled to Priſon by Force and Fury, and unjuſtly puniſhed. Thus Chriſt himſelf paraphraſes on the Word, in Luke xxi. 12. *They ſhall lay their Hands on you, and perſecute you*, (and in the next Words, he explains what that *Perſecution* is,) *delivering you up to the Synagogues, and into Priſons, being brought before Kings and Rulers, for my Name ſake.* And in that Place of St. *Luke*, which is parallel to this of St. *Matthew*, you find another Expreſſion for this of Perſecution, *Bleſſed are ye* * *when Men ſhall ſeparate you from their Company*, Luke vi. 22. Which refers to that *Separation* which was in uſe among the *Jews*, and was a middle Kind of Puniſhment between Death and Stripes, and was often put in Execution againſt

* Ὅταν ἀφορίσωσαι.

obſtinate Offenders. Theſe were driven from Company and Converſe both Civil and Sacred, and were counted no better than *Pagans*, until they were received again by the Church: So that here Chriſt acquaints his Diſciples, what Uſage they might expect from the *Jews*; they muſt look to be Excommunicated and Anathematiz'd, and ſhut out from all Society and Commerce, after the ſame Rate as the * *Sacri* were among the *Romans*, and † thoſe among the *Grecians*, who were thruſt away from common Converſation and Trading. But the || *Greek* Word, uſed in the Text, is alſo of a more *large and comprehenſive* Meaning, and ſignifies any great Vexation and Diſturbance, any Wrong or Violence whatſoever; and in this Senſe, we have it in the Liturgy of our Church, when we pray that *we may be hurt by no Perſecutions.*

THE third Expreſſion, our Saviour here uſes, is, *ſaying all Manner of Evil againſt you.* If the Phraſes in the Text allude to the Terms of Law among the *Jews*, (as ſome learned Expoſitors think) it is probable, that this relates to the Iniquity and Malice of thoſe that came in and bore falſe Witneſs againſt the Chriſtians, in Courts of Judicature, and there accuſed them of the Things which they were never guilty of; but I rather take it in a larger Senſe, as agreeing with that parallel Place of St. *Luke*, in the forementioned Chapter and Verſe, *Bleſſed are ye when Men ſhall reproach you, and caſt out your Name as Evil*; that is, when they ſhall mention you only in Way of Infamy and Reproach, when they ſhall ſcatter about falſe Rumours and Reports to defame you. Or, it may be, to *caſt out the Name* is meant of expunging and blotting their Names out of the publick Regiſters, excluding them from bearing any Office. They were thought unworthy of any publick Places and Employments. Or elſe, it may be meant of their *Perſons*, (as the Word *Name*, *in* good Authors, ſometimes imports) and ſo it may allude to the greater Sort of Excommunication and Execration among the *Jews*, whereby Offenders were ejected out of the Church, and accounted as Reprobates.

IN ſhort, all theſe Expreſſions in the Text, being put together, denote to us the various Sufferings, Wrongs and Injuries, which good and holy Men are like to undergo, either in their Names and Credits, or in their Bodies or Eſtates, or in any other Way, which the Malice and Fury of wicked Men ſhall invent. I ſum up all in theſe two Words, namely, that Chriſt's Diſciples to the World's End muſt expect *Reproaches* and *Perſecutions*.

Firſt, I SAY, they muſt expect to meet with Reproaches, and whatever it is that may diſparage their Reputations in the World. *They ſhall be reviled, and all Manner of Evil ſhall be ſaid againſt them.* This then is the Propoſition that I am to inſiſt upon, That it is the Lot of the beſt and holieſt Men, to be ſcoffed and laughed at, to be traduced and defamed, to be loaded with Obloquies and Slanders. *Abel* was the firſt Sufferer in this Sort, and was unworthily reviled by his own Brother. *Iſhmael* mock'd and derided *Iſaac*. *Joſeph*'s Brethren falſly traduced him, and laboured to render his Name odious. *Moſes* was often ſpoken againſt by the murmuring *Iſraelites*. The holy King *David* was the By-word of the lewd People of his Age: He tells us, that the *Drunkards made Songs of him*, Pſal. lxix. 12. And 'tis likely, that, in their prophaner Catches, they jeer'd his devout and ſacred Poetry, and play'd upon his Pſalms. The righteous Prophet *Elijah*, in *Ahab*'s Mouth, is no other than *the Troubler of Iſrael*, and the Author of all the Miſchiefs (eſpecially the Famine) that then befel the Kingdom. That Prophet, who, in Obedience to the divine Command, went to anoint *Jehu*, is call'd a *mad Fellow*, by a Captain who was really ſo. Hear what a doleful Complaint *Iſaiah* makes, *I and the Children, whom the Lord hath given me, are for Signs, and for Wonders in Iſrael*, Chap viii. 18. *Jeremiah was derided, not only by the Rabble of the Jews*, but by the great Ones, and thoſe in Authority; *I am* (ſaith he) *in deriſion daily, every one mocks me*, Jer. xx. 7. When *Zerubbabel* undertook the Building of the Temple, *Rehom* the Chancellor, and *Shimſhai* the Scribe, wrote againſt him to the King, and repreſented him as ſeditious, *Ezr.* iv. 6. When *Nehemiah* was erecting the Walls of *Jeruſalem*, *Sanballat*, and *Tobiah* accuſed him of Rebellion, *Neh.* ii. 19. The whole People of the *Jews* were

* Quibus aquâ & igni interdictum eſt.

† ὁι ᾽αγορᾶς ϗ λιμένων ᾽ειργόμενοι.

|| διώκειν.

were tax'd by *Haman*, for Diſloyalty and Diſobedience, *they keep not the King*'s *Laws*, ſaith he.

BUT we ſhall have freſher and more ample Matter, if we come to ſpeak of the Times of the Goſpel. And here, where ſhould we begin, but with our bleſſed Lord and Maſter? His Perſon was blaſphemed and derided, vilified and defamed, and whatever he ſaid, or did, was miſconſtrued and found Fault with. * *Is not this the Carpenter's Son?* ſay they; that is, as they meant it, the Son of a mean Tradeſman, a Mechanick: Or, as we read in another Place, *Is not this the Carpenter*, or rather † the *Builder?* Which if it were ſpoken after Chriſt had ſaid, that *he would build the Temple in three Days*, I ſhould think it refers to this Paſſage. So that this was their Scoff, Is this the famous Architect, he that boaſts of rebuilding the Temple in three Days? This is a ſpecial Workman indeed; here is an excellent Projector! At another Time, they cried out that our Saviour was a *Samaritan*; tho' they were not ignorant of his Lineage and Extraction, they knew well enough, that he was a *Galilean* by birth; but becauſe the *Samaritans* were a People addicted to Sorcery and Witchcraft, therefore they branded him with that Name, taxing him falſly and maliciouſly with the unlawful Practice of that People. And becauſe Sorcerers deal with the infernal Spirits, therefore they add, that *he hath a Devil.*

*Mat. xiii. 25.

† ὁ τέκτων Mar. vi. 3.

THE Hiſtory of the Goſpel will inform us, that it was the Scribes and Phariſees daily Employment to reproach Chriſt, to load him with Calumnies, thereby to make him odious among the People, and to expoſe him to the Rage of the Rulers. They upbraided him for the Company he kept, for eating and drinking with Publicans and Sinners. Obſerve how croſs and perverſe theſe Men were, nothing could pleaſe them. *John* the Baptiſt came neither eating or drinking; that is, he was given to Retirement and Solitude, and therefore they cried out, that he had a Devil. Our Saviour came eating and drinking, that is, he maintained a Converſation with all Sorts of Perſons, and was free and obliging in his Behaviour, and therefore, one would think, ſhould have pleaſed thoſe captious Men; but behold, they reproach Chriſt, for that which they pretend they would have liked in the *Baptiſt:* Chriſt is voted a Glutton and Wine-bibber, becauſe he did not ſpend ſo much time in the Deſart, as the other did. They accuſed him at another Time of Prophaneneſs and Sabbath-breaking; and at laſt, they charged him with Blaſphemy and Sedition, not unlike that Accuſation againſt *Naboth*, that *he curſed God and the King*, 1 Kings, xxi. 12.

AND ſince the Maſter was thus reviled and defamed, what can Servants and Followers expect but the ſame Uſage? Accordingly St. *Stephen* (who led the Van of the whole Army of Martyrs) was accuſed for *ſpeaking blaſphemous Words againſt God, againſt Moſes, and againſt the Temple, and againſt the Law*, Acts vi. 13. *Tertullius* (who, it ſeems, was as good at Raillery, as Oratory) calls St. *Paul* a *peſtilent Fellow*, others call'd him a *Babbler:* And it was the Lot of all the Apoſtles, to be vilified and calumniated. *Theſe Men are full of new Wine*, Acts ii. 13. Inſpiration is interpreted to be Drunkenneſs and Debauchery. *Theſe are they that have turn'd the World upſide down*, Acts xvii. 6. *We are made as the Filth of the World, and are the Off-ſcowring of all Things*, 1 Cor. iv. 13. The chriſtian Religion itſelf, was *a Sect that was every where ſpoken againſt*, Acts xxviii. 22. Both it, and its Profeſſors, were odious to the *Romans* and other Nations, becauſe the *Jews* and their Religion was ſo hateful to them; for the chriſtian Religion was reckoned as *Jewiſh*, and that for this Reaſon, becauſe it was from *Judea*, and had its Riſe from Chriſt, who was a *Jew*. Thence it was, that all the Calumnies, which were caſt upon the *Jews* and their Religion, were applied to Chriſtianity and its Votaries, as the Worſhipping an Aſs's Head, and the like.

ORIGEN's Book againſt *Celſus*, and *Euſebius*'s Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, acquaints us, how the chriſtian Religion was traduced, and what were the uſual Cavils of the Pagans againſt the Chriſtians. It was objected by them, that they were guilty of groſs Impurities, and Immoralities in their Meetings, (their *Conventicles*, as they then call'd them) that they kill'd their Infants, and then fed on their Fleſh, and drank their Blood; that (beſides theſe bloody Feaſts) they lived in the conſtant Practice of Lewdneſs and Inceſt, that when they were well warmed at their Night Feaſts, they put out the Candles, and fell to their unlawful Embraces in the Dark. Such horrid Slanders were thoſe innocent Souls loaded with

And indeed, there was no Manner of Impiety and Wickedneſs, but you find it charg'd upon the Chriſtians. They were eſteemed *Atheiſts*, and call'd ſo: This was a common Name of Reproach given them by the *Pagans*, as is atteſted by * *Athenagoras*, by † *Juſtin Martyr*, and ¶ *Clement* of *Alexandria*: And accordingly *Julian* the Apoſtate ſtiled Chriſtianity *Atheiſm*, as we learn from § *Sozomen Cæcilias*, who perſonates the *Gentile*, and maintains the Cauſe of *Paganiſm* againſt *Chriſtianity*, makes it Part of his Charge againſt the Chriſtians, that || they fled from the Light, and prated in Corners; but dar'd not ſhew their Heads abroad. This is very harſh, the Chriſtians were not permitted to preach publickly, and then they are jeer'd for it. They were alſo impeach'd of Rebellion, and all Kind of Villany in the State. They are repreſented as a Sort of Men that * were moſt deſperately and irrecoverably *Factious*. They were cried down for oppoſing the Eſtabliſhed Laws, and were proclaim'd Traitors, and falſe to the Empire:

NAY, to convince you of the wilful Spight and Hatred of the Chriſtians Adverſaries, and to let you ſee that *Reviling* was their *Deſign*, they uſed to attribute all the Plagues, Wars, Famines, and all other Calamities that befel them to the Chriſtians. Theſe were the Perſons that infected the Air, and brought a Curſe on the Earth, and diſturb'd all the Elements, and wrought Confuſion, and put the World out of Order: If any publick Miſchief happen'd to the Country, preſently the Chriſtians were ſaid to be the Cauſe of it, as you may ſatisfy yourſelves at large in *Tertullian*'s Apology for the Chriſtians, and in the Writings of *Juſtin*, *Cyprian*, *Arnobius* and *Euſebius*. The firſt of theſe ſums up all in ſhort, thus, † *A Chriſtian*, ſaith he, *is one that is guilty of all Enormities, one that is an Enemy to the Gods, to the Emperors, to the Laws, to Manners, and to the whole World itſelf*: Hence it was, that the very Word *Chriſtian* carried an Odium in its Sound. As that memorable Example of *Attalus* teſtifies; for when he was led about in the Amphitheater, there was carried a little Table before him, on which was writ, *This is* Attalus *the Chriſtian*. So when *Polycarp* was carried to Execution, the Crier proclaim'd that *Polycarp had confeſſed himſelf to be a Chriſtian*. That was Crime ſufficient: The very Name was Matter of Condemnation. The uſual Language was, Such a one is a good Man, were it not that he is a Chriſtian: We have nothing to ſay againſt him; but that he embraces Chriſtianity, and that is criminal enough.

I SHOULD now proceed to ſhew, in other Inſtances, how the Chriſtians have been defam'd and revil'd: But before I do this, I will make a ſeaſonable Reflection on what hath been ſaid. I cannot but take Notice, that the Spirit of Falſhood and Lying ran very high among thoſe Adverſaries of Chriſtianity; for there could be nothing more unlikely and improbable, than thoſe Reproaches and Imputations, which they faſten'd on the Chriſtians. He, that broaches Falſhood, ſhould, if he would be credited, be within the Bounds of Probability: But theſe vile Men, who aſperſed the Primitive Chriſtians, invented ſuch Things againſt them, as had nothing of Likelihood to recommend them to the Belief of thoſe that heard them. Let us look back a while on the ſeveral Calumnies and Objections which were rais'd againſt Chriſt and his Followers; and we ſhall plainly ſee, that they were groundleſs and unreaſonable. Tho' *he went about doing good*, and made it his Buſineſs to be beneficial to Mankind, yet he was rail'd at as a Man of ill Deſigns, and one that diſturb'd the World. Tho' no Man upon Earth dealt more openly and fairly, than he did, and perform'd his Miracles in the Face of the World: So that there could be nothing of Cheat and Deluſion in what he did; yet he was revil'd as an Impoſtor, and a Seducer of the People. Tho' his whole Life was a Courſe of Sobriety and Temperance, and he warn'd his Hearers againſt overcharging their Hearts with Surfeiting and Drunkenneſs, and the Cares and Pleaſures of the World, yet (as we have heard) he was cry'd out againſt as a Glutton and Drunkard. Tho' he came to deſtroy the Works of the Devil, and to ruin his Kingdom; yet he was repreſented as one that dealt with the Evil Spirit, and effected his Miracles by his Help. The Accuſation ran high againſt him, that he forbad the People to give Tribute to *Caſar*, tho' he wrought a Miracle to pay *Cæſar* his Tax-Money.

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* Legat. pro Chriſtian.
† Apol. 2. ¶ Strom. lib. 7.
§ Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 5. c. 16.
|| Latebroſa & lucifuga natio, in publico muta, in angulis garrula. Min. ut. Fel.

* Homines deploratæ, illicitæ ac deſperatæ factionis. Idem.

† Apolog.

ANOTHER Crime objected to him was, that *he made himſelf a King* (which was the higheſt Sort of Treaſon) whereas we read, that he withdrew, and wholly refuſed the Motion, when the People would by all Means have made him King. In brief, they impeach'd him of Blaſphemy and Sedition; two Things which he was the fartheſt from being guilty of, of any Perſon alive, as his Words and Actions teſtify'd: And we know that he charg'd his Hearers, that they *ſhould give to Cæſar the Things that were Cæſar's, and to God the Things that were God's.*

NEXT I will ſhew, that the Accuſations, which were brought againſt Chriſt's Followers, contain'd great and notorious Improbabilities in them. It was objected againſt the Primitive Chriſtians by the *Pagans*, that they denied a God, and the divine Nature: But what could be more groundleſs? For they were the only Perſons that had attain'd to right and ſettled Notions concerning the divine Being, and all his Attributes and Perfections; And on the Contrary, (as * one of the Antients retorts this Cavil againſt the Chriſtians) the *Pagans*, who imputed Atheiſm to the Chriſtians, were thoſe that had no true Knowledge of the Deity, and his Nature and Properties. This is evident in a plain Inſtance, namely, their Worſhipping of Idols and falſe Gods which, becauſe the Chriſtians would not ſubmit to, they were cried out againſt as *Atheiſts*.

* Athenag. Legat. pro Chriſtianis.

AGAIN, There was no real Ground for that Report, that they fed upon human Fleſh and Blood; for tho' ſome *Hereticks* might give the *Pagans* Occaſion to reproach the Chriſtians in this Manner, they being wont to initiate Perſons into their Sect with the Blood of a ſlain Boy, as † *Epiphanius* and * *Auguſtine* relate, whence ſome of the Heathens might look upon this as a general Practice among the Chriſtians: And tho' they might likewiſe interpret the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to the Chriſtians Diſhonour, they hearing that they did *eat Chriſt's Body* and *drink his Blood*, it is no Wonder that they made this groſs Conſtruction of it: Yet there was no true Reaſon why this Imputation ſhould be fix'd upon the Chriſtians, they being profeſs'd Enemies to all inhumane and bloody Practices. And this Accuſation is confuted from the known Cuſtom of the Chriſtians in thoſe Times, *viz. their abſtaining from the Blood* of any Animal, according to the Decree of the Apoſtle, in *Acts* xv. This was thought fit to be impos'd upon them in that early Riſe of Chriſtianity, and the Church did inviolably obſerve it for many Years, as the Writers of the firſt Ages inform us. Now, from this Uſage of the Chriſtians, it is manifeſt, that they could not reaſonably be charged with Drinking the Blood of Infants, or any other.

† Hæreſ. 27 & 49.
* Catalog. Hæret.

AND then as for their Inceſt and promiſcuous Matrimony, the *Pagans* had no Reaſon to accuſe the Primitive Chriſtians of theſe, they being brought up by the Inſtitution and Religion of the Goſpel to an entire Chaſtity and Purity, and being ſtrictly commanded to abandon all Laſciviouſneſs and Wantonneſs, and to *poſſeſs their Veſſels in Sanctification and Honour.* But if there was any *Pretence* for this Slander thrown upon the Chriſtians, it was by Reaſon of their firm Union and entire Love to one another, their familiar Converſe and aſſociating together, and their calling one another by the endearing Names of *Brethren* and *Siſters*, which was uſual among them. Perhaps the blind and malicious Gentiles improv'd this into the Reproach of inceſtuous Mixtures.

FURTHER, the Chriſtians were accus'd for being againſt *Cæſar*, and yet theſe were the Perſons who uſed to pray very particularly and ſolemnly for the Emperor's Health and Proſperity; and they fought his Battles, and were never known to rebel againſt him or his Miniſters. It is true, they would not ſacrifice, or ſupplicate the Idols for the Emperor's Safety: They would not ſwear by his Genius or Fortune: They would not worſhip the Emperors as Gods, which was then much in Faſhion: And this might be the Occaſion of imputing Diſloyalty to the Chriſtians, but there was no real Ground for it.

MOREOVER, they were ſaid to be the Authors of all the Calamities in the *Roman* Empire: And yet theſe were the Men that by their Prayers averted Plagues, and deriv'd Bleſſings on the Places where they liv'd. Thus it is eaſy to go through the ſeveral Particulars, and to ſhew how unreaſonable the Objections and Cavils of the Heathens were againſt the antient Chriſtians. *Trajan*'s Epiſtles to *Pliny*, and his again to that Emperor, are a ſufficient (as they are a laſting) Monument of the Innocency of thoſe Primitive Saints and Servants of God. Only this is to be ſaid, Reputation is a nice Thing, and if it be once blemiſh'd, tho' unjuſtly, the Stain will hardly wear out. This thoſe Adverſaries of the Chriſtian Religion were ſenſible of, and accordingly they reſolved to brand the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity with opprobrious Names, to charge them with all Villanies, to let fly at them with all Manner of Ignominy and Detraction, to accuſe, aſperſe and defame them, and to expoſe them to Scorn and Deriſion, tho' at the Bottom there was no Ground or Reaſon for it.

I AM now to go on where I left off, that is, having already ſhew'd how the antient Chriſtians were reviled and ſlander'd by the *Pagans*, I will let you ſee that ſome ſuch Kind of Treatment they met with from *corrupt* and *falſe Brethren*, who depraved the Chriſtian Faith, and ran into Errors and Hereſies, or who indulged themſelves in licentious Practices. The *Gnoſticks*, and after them the *Montaniſts*, call'd all beſides themſelves *Pſychical*, mere Animals, flat and dull Creatures: But their own Sect were ſtil'd *Pneumatick*, a Rank of ſpiritual and refined Men. The *Arians* revil'd and traduced the Orthodox Chriſtians as Men of little Senſe and Reaſon; and they uſed all reproachful Terms, and invented all Sorts of Calumnies againſt the Chief of them, eſpecially *Athanaſius*. They gave him the Nick-name of *Satanaſius*, and uſed all the Arts imaginable to repreſent him infamous. They endeavoured to render him obnoxious to the Civil Laws, by accuſing him of Murder; they ſuborn'd a Harlot to lay to his Charge Fornication, and they ſtruck at his Reputation on other Accounts.

AND theſe Slanders againſt him have been reviv'd ſince by thoſe Men who favour the *Arian* Hereſy *. *Socinus* repreſents that good Father as a very bad Man, a factious Perſon, a Diſſembler, the Author and Inciter to War and Bloodſhed, and he condemns him for Immodeſty and Incontinency. And the *Unitarians*, in a late † Pamphlet, confidently tell the World, that *Athanaſius* committed Fornication, and that with a Nun; tho' 'tis well known that this was a falſe Accuſation, and plainly prov'd to be ſo. Mr. *Whiſton*, who is lately turned *Arian*, treads in the Steps of theſe Men, and ſtrives to blaſt the Credit of that bleſſed Servant of God: So the Enemies of *Euſtathius*, the godly Biſhop of *Antioch*, who liv'd about the ſame Time, was charg'd with the ſame Crime by his Adverſaries; for, as *Theodoret* acquaints us, a lewd Woman was hired by them to accuſe him of an infamous Converſation with her, und that ſhe had a Child by him. How unworthily was St. *Jerom* treated by the *Roman* Clergy for perſuading *Paula* and other Ladies to betake themſelves to a retired Life? They reported he had too great Familiarity with them, of which he purges himſelf in his Epiſtle to *Aſella* and others, and by many other Ways, they endeavour'd to blaſt his Name, and render him vile and odious.

* Reſponſ. ad ſcrupulos.

† The Acts of great *Athanaſius*, &c.

BUT to come down to After-Ages, when did the Perſecution of the Tongue ever more rage, than ſince the Time that the Corruptions and Idolatry of the Church of *Rome* have been ſtruck at? The Emperor *Conſtantine* the Fourth, becauſe he was zealous againſt Images, was called *Copronimus*, as if he had polluted the Font when he was baptized, and he was term'd *Antichriſt*: And afterwards, the Monks, in their Writings, egregiouſly aſperſe him, as they did his Father *Leo Iſaurus*, and his Son *Leo* the 3d, who were great Oppoſers of Images, and broke them down and burnt them. The *Waldenſes*, who always ſhew'd themſelves averſe to the idolatrous Corruptions of *Rome*, are repreſented by the *Pontifician* Writers, as ſtrong and monſtrous Hereticks, and Aſſerters of damnable Doctrines; and their Practice is ſaid by them, to be as abominable as their Opinions; for they tell us, that they indulg'd themſelves in all Lewdneſs and Uncleanneſs, even in Sodomy itſelf: Of which, and other groſs Slanders, they are clear'd by Arch-biſhop *Uſher*, in his Treatiſe of *the Succeſſion of the Chriſtian Churches*. The Popiſh Penmen aver, that *Wickliff* deſpair'd at his Death, and was openly ſtruck by the Hand of God, and ſent immediately to Hell. *John Hus*, and *Jerom* of *Prague*, advanced to their Martyrdom with Paper Crowns on their Heads, painted with red Devils, which their Adverſaries forc'd them to wear, to let the People underſtand what Opinion they had of theſe godly Men.

WHEN did the Papiſts exerciſe the Art of Railing more vigorouſly and more loudly than ſince the *Reformation?* What a Gagling have theſe *Roman Geeſe* made to preſerve their *Capitol?* They are obſerv'd never to be inventive and witty (as they imagine) as when they undertake to jeer a *Lutheran* or a *Calviniſt*, a Heretic or a Schiſmatic, for theſe are the Names they are pleas'd to call us by. What horrid Lyes did the Monks and Friars make of *Martin Luther*, as that he had his Call immediately (but very ſolemnly) from the Devil, and that he was ſetched away Body and Soul by him? He is the Beaſt ſpoken of in the *Revelation*; for *Genebrard*, *Feuardentius*, and others aſſure us, that the Number of the Beaſt, *666*, is found in his Name. *Luther* himſelf * ſaith, that his Name was more odious to the Papiſts than that of any Thief or Murderer. *Bolſec* (that profeſſed Railer) hath the Impudence to relate that *Calvin* was eaten up of Worms, and ſo died, calling on the Devil, and blaſpheming and curſing God. And his whole Life is miſrepreſented, as is confeſs'd by an ingenious † Man of the *Roman* Communion: Prejudice and Intereſt (ſaith he) govern Men in their writing his Life. And moſt apparently groundleſs and falſe are all thoſe other Slanders vented by this Author and *Staphylus*, and *Sanders*, and other *Romaniſts*, not only againſt *Luther* and *Calvin*, but *Zuinglius*, *Beza*, and other Reformers. *Junius* had, if you'll believe this Sort of Writers, a Cloven Foot. *Gueux*, that is, Rogues and Beggars, was the Name given to the *Proteſtants* in *Flanders* by a *French* Lord. *Huguenots* in *France*, and *Lollards* in *Germany* and *England*, were uſed as ignominious Names to aſperſe all in thoſe Countries that oppos'd the Corruptions of *Rome*. This lying Spirit ſpread it abroad, that Archbiſhop *Cranmer* had been an *Hoſtler* in an Inn, and it is likely that that Notion brought in the fabulous Story of the *Nag*'s-*head* Conſecration, which was as groundleſs and malicious as that of the *Aſs*'s *Head*, which the *Pagans* ſaid the Chriſtians worſhipp'd. But I will not trouble you any longer with the *Particular Defamations* which theſe Sons of *Belial* have made uſe of to traduce the moſt holy and eminent Perſons of God's Church, and the glorious Lights of the Reformation. Let it ſuffice, that I have proved from the Sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament, and alſo from the Hiſtories of the Primitive Church, and from later Records, that good and godly Men have been defamed and reviled by the wicked World, which was the thing I undertook to prove.

THE next thing I am to ſpeak of is ſomething higher, and more notorious than *Reviling*, and that is *Perſecution*. It hath been the Lot of righteous and holy Men, not only to be evil ſpoken of, but to be evilly handled. The pious Pſalmiſt lets us know that the *Ploughers ploughed upon his Back, and made long Furrows*, and that he was expos'd to all Kinds of Troubles and Diſtreſſes by the prevailing Malice of his Enemies. *Jeremiah* was impriſon'd, and hardly eſcap'd with his Life. The three *Hebrew* Captives were thrown into the Furnace: The Mother and her ſeven Sons were put to Death under *Antiochus Epiphanes*. And afterwards, when the Meſſias came into the World, the *Jews* exerted the utmoſt of their Indignation and Cruelty againſt him, and ſlew him, and hang'd him on a Tree. And his Followers met with the like hard Uſage, as the Holy Scriptures and the Eccleſiaſtical Writings inform us. *Stephen*, the firſt Martyr, was ſton'd to death; *James* the Son of *Zebedee* was ſlain with the Sword; *Thomas* was kill'd with a Dart, or thruſt through with a Spear; *Bartholomew* was beaten with Cudgels, and then crucified, after that flead alive, and at laſt beheaded; *Matthias* was ſton'd, and then beheaded; *James* the Son of *Alpheus* was thrown down from the Battlements of the Temple, and afterward ſtoned. *Andrew*, and *Simon Zelotes*, and *Judas*, (called *Thaddæus* were crucified; *Philip* was both crucified and ſtoned to Death; St. *Matthew* was ſlain with the Sword or Spear; St. *Mark* was burnt alive, *Paul* was beheaded, and *Peter* crucified.

AND this leads me now to give a ſhort Narrative of the *Ten notorious Perſecutions* under the *Roman*, *Pagan* Emperors. The firſt of which was began by that bloody Tyrant *Nero*, in the 13th Year of his Reign. *Tertullian* appeals to the * *Roman* Records to atteſt this, that he was the firſt Emperor that perſecuted the Chriſtians. With whom agrees *Euſebius*, who ſaith † he was the firſt of the Emperors that was a profeſſed Enemy to the religious Worſhip. Before this Time the Chriſtians were not puniſh'd by the *Roman* Laws on the Account of their Religion; yea, we are told by the forementioned Writers, that *Tiberius*, though a bloody Prince, by Edict, order'd that the Chriſtians, as ſuch, ſhould not be meddled with. But it was enacted by *Nero*, that whoever acknowledg'd himſelf a Chriſtian, ſhould on that very Account be convicted as an Enemy of Mankind, and be put to Death without any farther Delay, or making Defence: And it was by Vertue of this Law that the following Emperors perſecuted the Chriſtians. But it ſeems the firſt Perſecution under *Nero* was rais'd againſt the Chriſtians as *Incendiaries*, for *he* ſet *Rome* on fire, and then laid it on the *Chriſtians*: He commanded them to be puniſh'd and put to Death, as if they had committed that Fact. This was the firſt Occaſion of making it criminal to be a Chriſtian, and of ordering capital Puniſhments againſt it. He, who had the Malice to accuſe the Chriſtians for burning *Rome*, had alſo the Cruelty to revenge it by the moſt grievous Penalties, ſuch as caſting them to Beaſts, hanging, beheading, crucifying, burning: This laſt was moſt in Uſe at *Rome*, where the Chriſtians were committed to the Flames *, to give Light in the great Streets at Night: For ſo we are told by *Tacitus*, and other credible Hiſtorians, that inſtead of Lamps or Candles, when the Sun went down, *Nero* order'd that the Wax'd-paper Coats ſhould be put on the Chriſtians, and that then they ſhould be ſet on fire, and light the City with the Blaze. Cruelty was grown wanton ſurely, when they burnt Chriſtians to maintain Light for *Nero*'s Night-Sports in his Gardens, as *Tacitus* alſo reports. Under this Emperor ſuffer'd thoſe forenam'd Apoſtles, St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, as St. *Jerom* and *Euſebius* tell us, though others ſay there was a Year's Diſtance between their Deaths. Under him alſo ſuffer'd *James* the Great and the Leſſer, *Philip*, *Bartholomew*, *Barnabas* and *Mark*.

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* On the Epiſtle to the *Galatians*.

† *Moreri* Diction. Hiſtor'

* Conſulite commentarios veſtros, illic reperietis primum Neronem in hanc ſectam cum maximè Romæ ferientem Cæſarino gladio ferociſſe. *Apologet.*

† Πρῶτος αὐτοκρατόρων τῆς εἰς τὸ Θεῖον εὐσεβείας πολέμιος. Hiſt. Eccl. *l.* 2. *c.* 24.

VESPASIAN put a Stop to this *firſt Perſecution*, but after his Death aroſe the *ſecond*, namely, under *Domitian* in the 12th Year of his Reign, or in the 14th, as St. *Jerom* ſaith. The Occaſion of this freſh Perſecution was the great Increaſe of the Chriſtians, ſo that their Numbers ſeem'd formidable to the Empire. Beſides, *Domitian* wou'd be acknowledg'd as a God, which the Chriſtians oppoſed, and thereupon felt his Rage and Fury. By his Command, St. *John*, the Apoſtle and Evangeliſt, was put into a Veſſel of ſcalding Oil, and, coming out thence ſafe and unhurt, was baniſh'd into the Iſle of *Patmos*. *Antipas*, Biſhop of *Pergamus*, ſuffer'd Death for Chriſt in his Reign, as was foretold in *Rev.* ii 13. Though 'tis ſpoke there in the Time paſt, as if he had already ſuffer'd, which is no unuſual Thing in prophetic Writings. A true Succeſſor of *Nero* was this *Domitian*, *quem calvum dixit ſua Roma Neronem*, as *Tertullian* ſpeaks. He is call'd by the ſame Father a *Portion* or *Part of Nero*: Yea, this monſtrous Part was as great as the Whole.

UNDER *Trajan* (who was the next Emperor but one) follow'd the *Third Perſecution* of the Chriſtians, though he was a mild and gentle Prince, and had, by the Decree of the *Roman* Senate, the Title of *Optimus* given him. But the Ground of his perſecuting the Chriſtians (which began in the third Year of his Reign) was the Belief that at that time prevail'd, namely, that the Chriſtians were the Cauſe of all the publick Calamities that befel the Empire. *Dionyſius* the *Areopagite*, converted by St. *Paul*, was a Martyr in *France* in this Emperor's Reign: And now ſuffer'd that holy Servant of God *Ignatius*, the Biſhop of *Antioch*, who was thrown to the wild Beaſts, and devour'd by them. But *Pliny*, giving this Emperor an Account of the innocent Behaviour of the Chriſtians, and ſatisfying him that they were blameleſs, an Edict was put forth by this Emperor to forbid all Perſecution of them.

THE *Fourth Perſecution* raged under *Marcus Antoninus Pius*, *M. Aurelius Antoninus*, and *Lucius Verus* his Brother and Colleague. At this time, among other eminent Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, *Polycarp*, who had been St. *John*'s Diſciple, and was the Biſhop of *Smyrna* (call'd the *Angel of the Church of Smyrna*, in the Book of the *Revelation*) was put to Death. The Fire had not Force enough to conſume his Body, or to end his Life, therefore he was run through with a Sword. Now ſuffer'd *Juſtin*, the *Platonic* Philoſopher, who being converted to the Chriſtian Faith, and dying for it, was ſtil'd the *Martyr* by way of Eminency. But this Perſecution did not long diſturb the Peace of the Church, for the Emperor *Aurelius Antonine*, in Acknowledgment of the Favour he receiv'd from Heaven, by Means of the Prayers of the Chriſtian Soldiers in the War againſt the *Quadi*, expreſsly commanded that they ſhould not be perſecuted for their Religion, as we read in *Euſebius*. And the ſame Author ſaith, that he was wrought

upon

* In uſum nocturni luminis. *Tacit.* Annal. l. 15. *Sulp Sev.* lib. 2.

upon by the Apologies of *Melito*, *Athenagoras* and *Juſtin*, and thence gave Leave to the Chriſtians to enjoy the Liberty of their Religion.

THE *next Perſecution*, which was very furious, was rais'd by *Septimius Severus*. This Emperor forgot his own Motto, *Do not that to others which thou wouldſt not have done to thyſelf*; otherwiſe he would not have been ſo unmerciful to the Chriſtians; for though they were not perſecuted by his immediate Order, yet he ſuffer'd the Rabble to fall upon them. Now it was that *Irenæus*, that good Biſhop of *Lyons*, ſuffer'd Martyrdom: But the Chriſtians in *Egypt*, and other Parts of *Africa*, were the Perſons who chiefly felt the Shock of this fifth Perſecution.

AFTER the Succeſſion of ſeveral Emperors, *Maximinus* was the Author of the *Sixth*.

AND the *Seventh* was begun by *Decius*, who, if he had not outrageouſly perſecuted the Chriſtians, might have been number'd among the beſt Emperors; for he was a Man of great Valour and Wiſdom. Under him ſuffer'd *Origen* at *Alexandria*, who, at length, ſubmitted to do Sacrifice to a *Pagan* Idol, but bitterly lamented this his Cowardice and Apoſtacy ſoon after.

VALERIAN was the Author of the *Eighth Perſecution*, under whom, *Cyprian*, the eminent Father and Biſhop of *Carthage* had his Head ſtruck off with a Sword; and *Laurence*, another undaunted Chriſtian, was broil'd on a Gridiron. For the Appetite of this Tyrant was not contented with what had pleaſed other cruel Emperors before; he not only boil'd Chriſtians in Caldrons, and bak'd them in Ovens, but his ſavage Cruelty would needs taſte of Roaſt and Carbonadoes.

THE *Ninth Perſecution* began under *Aurelian*, and very great Numbers of Chriſtians ſuffer'd Torments and Death itſelf under this Emperor; but the Particulars are not to be mention'd here.

I PASS to the *Tenth* and *Laſt*, which was more furious than all the preceding Ones. This began under *Diocleſian*, and his Colleague *Maximian*, and laſted ten Years, though theſe Perſons carried it on but two or three Years. The whole Perſecution was under ſeven tyrannical Perſons; for the true Account (which I find is miſtaken by ſome Writers) is thus, *Diocleſian* and *Maximian*, governing as Emperors together, choſe other two Cæſars under them, to wit, *Galerius Maximinus* and *Conſtantius Chlorus*, the Father of *Conſtantine the Great*. *Diocleſian* and *Maximian*, being weary of Perſecuting, laid down their Empire, and retired to a private Life The Imperial Dominion remained with *Conſtantius* and *Galerius*, which two divided the Monarchy between them, but very unequally, for the former, as a modeſt Prince, contented only with the Imperial Title, choſe only *France*, *Spain*, and *Britain*, but the latter had all the other Countries. *Conſtantius* took *Conſtantine* his Son to be his Partner in the Throne; and *Galerius* choſe to him *Maximinus* and *Severus* to be his Colleagues. Whilſt theſe latter were in *Aſia*, the *Roman* Soldiers advanced to the Throne *Maxentius* the Son of *Maximian*; who had abdicated the Empire, as was ſaid before. *Maximinus* diſpatched his Son *Severus* againſt this *Maxentius*, whom he ſoon defeated and ſlew in Battle. In his Place *Maximinus* choſe *Licinius*, who, breaking his Friendſhip with *Conſtantine*, was vanquiſh'd by him in the Field. *Maximian* died in great Torment, being ſmitten with a moſt noiſome and painful Ulcer. *Conſtantine* favoured the Chriſtians, as his Father *Conſtantius* had done, and ſurvived the ſeven Authors of the laſt Perſecution; namely, *Diocleſian*, *Maximian*, *Galerius*, *Severus*, *Maximinus*, *Maxentius*, *Licinius*. But ſometimes all the laſt Perſecution takes its Denomination from *Diocleſian*, becauſe this Perſecution was firſt raiſed by him, and becauſe he and *Maximian*, who was join'd in the Empire with him, exceeded the others in Cruelty.

THEN it was that they imputed afreſh all the Calamities which befel the the Empire to the Chriſtians, and therefore they ſent them out of the World as faſt as they could. To promote this, as *Cedrenus* relates, it was given out, that it was declared by an Oracle, that when the Chriſtians were all ſlain, the *Roman* Empire ſhould proſper and flouriſh; and theſe Co-Emperors ſet up theſe Words of the Oracle on a Pillar, to be read of all Men; to work therefore they went, and diſpatched the Chriſtians by Wholeſale. Among many others, this is one remarkable and tragical Inſtance of their Cruelty [*], That about twenty thouſand Chriſtians, being met together at *Nicomedia*, on Chriſt's Birth-Day, were all burnt in their Place of Meeting, becauſe they refuſed to ſacrifice to Idols. And || *Euſebius* ſaith, that he ſaw a City of Chriſtians in *Phrygia*, with all the Inhabitants, ſmall and great, in it, wholly deſtroyed by the Command of *Diocleſian* and *Maximian*, becauſe they would not be preſent at the Sacrifices of the Heathens. For this was the conſtant Practice in thoſe Days, they haled Men and Women before the Idols, and forced them to fall down to them, or to lay down their Lives immediately. Their Fury and Madneſs was ſuch againſt the Chriſtians that *Serena*, *Diocleſian*'s own Wife, was put to Death for being a Chriſtian.

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[*] *Niceph.* Hiſt. Eccl. l. 7. c. 6.

IN this tenth and laſt Perſecution, the Number of Martyrs increaſed exceedingly above what it had been in the foregoing ones. * St. *Jerom*, ſpeaking of the vaſt Multitude of Martyrs in *Diocleſian*'s Reign, aſſures us, that there was never a Day in the Year except the Firſt of *January* (a Day not for ſhedding of Blood among the *Romans*, elſe it is probable it had not been excepted) whereunto the Number of Five thouſand Martyrs, at leaſt, might not be aſſigned. In one Year there were ſlain, of the Faithful in *Egypt*, a hundred and forty and four thouſand, beſides a great many baniſhed, as || *Scaliger* from ancient Records reports. Others relate from credible Authors, that in ſome Parts of the Weſt, ſeventeen thouſand Men, Women, and Children, were put to Death within one Month, beſides vaſt Numbers otherwiſe puniſhed. This tenth Perſecution reached to *Britain*, which yielded many Hundreds of Chriſtian Martyrs, of whom *Alban*, a Citizen of *Verulam*, was the firſt.

AT this Time it was that the poor harmleſs Chriſtians in all Places underwent the moſt exquiſite Sufferings, that the Malice of their Enemies was able to inflict upon them. The Eighth Book of *Euſebius*'s Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory (which may juſtly be called his Martyrology) particularly relates the *various Torments* which the Chriſtians were put to under *Diocleſian*, the very mentioning of which begets Horror in all compaſſionate Minds. They were unmercifully whipp'd and ſcourg'd, they were choak'd and ſtrangl'd, they were ſlain with the Sword, they were committed to the Flames, and burnt in Furnaces; they were ſtarv'd with Cold and Hunger, they were worried by wild Beaſts, they were torn in Pieces with Dogs, they were drawn aſunder by Horſes, they were toſs'd on the Horns of mad Bulls, they were flead alive, they were roaſted and broil'd on Gridirons, they were thrown down from Rocks and Precipices, they were ſwallowed up by the Sea, they were prick'd under the Nails with ſharp Needles, and died with the Extremity of the Pain, their Breaſts and Paps were ſeared with hot Irons, their Bones were broken with Batts, they were torn aſunder with the Boughs of trees, their Eyes were bored out, and they had their Brains beat out with Cudgels; they were ſtoned to Death, they were broken in Mortars, they were crucified; in ſhort, there was no Sort of Puniſhments, no Kind of Torments, no Inſtruments of Cruelty, we know of, wherewith they did not exerciſe the Faith and Patience, the Strength and Courage, of the Martyrs: To conclude with the Words of *Lactantius*, who flouriſh'd in *Diocleſian*'s Time, and thus deſcribes him and his Perſecution, * "No Man, " (ſaith he) can ſufficiently ſet forth the ſavage and cruel " Nature of this ſo monſtrous a Beaſt, who, couching in one " Place, yet rageth with his iron Fangs throughout the whole " World, and doth not only ſcatter the Limbs of the poor " Chriſtians, but breaks their very Bones; yea, he ſhews " his Fury on their Aſhes, leſt there ſhould be found any " Place for their Burial. What barbarous Cruelty and raving Madneſs was this " to deny the Light to the Living, and the Earth to the Dead?

THESE were the *Ten Perſecutions*, and upon this ſhort Narrative which I have given you of them many uſeful *Obſervations* might be made; as,

1. THE great Mercy of God in the Midſt of this Severity is remarkable. Tho' the ſuffering Time of the Church began in the Year of our Lord 62, and laſted 'till 313, yet by the divine Goodneſs there were granted unto the Chriſtians ſeveral little *Intervals* and ſhort *Reſpites*, wherein they had Time to take Breath. God was pleaſed to abate the Fury of the Perſecutors, and to vouchſafe unto his

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|| Hiſt. Ecc. l. 8. c. 11.

* Epiſt. ad Heliodor. & Chromat.

|| De Emendat. temporis, lib. 5.

* Nemo hujus tantæ belluæ immanitatem poteſt pro merito deſcribere, quæ uno loco recubans, tamen per totum orbem dentibus ferreis ſævit, & non tantum artus hominum diſſipat, ſed & oſſa ipſa comminuit, & in cineres ſurit, nè quis extet ſepulturæ locus. Quænam illa feritas, quæ rabies, quæ inſania eſt lucem vivis, terram mortuis denegaſſe? Inſtitut. lib. 5. cap. 11.

his Servants ſhort Seaſons of Refreſhment; by which was fulfilled that of the Pſalmiſt, *The Rod of the Wicked ſhall not reſt on the Lot of the Righteous*, Pſal. cxxv. 3. There are Sun-ſhine and Clouds, Calms and Storms, ſucceeding one another: The Godly muſt be kept in Action, and therefore it may be obſerved, that when the Fury of the Church's Adverſaries hath cool'd, it hath ſoon after grown hot again. And again, when their Spite and Malice have been recruited, you may take Notice, that, in a little Time after, they are out of Breath. The Perſecution which *Nero* raiſed had been too boiſterous, and might have quite overſet the Chriſtians, if it had not been calmed by that kind and merciful Emperor *Titus Veſpaſian*, who ſucceeded him. The Strength and Patience of the Perſecuted had been wholly exhauſted under the Third Perſecution, cauſed by *Trajan*, if his Succeſſor *Adrian* had not proved mild to them, who bore a Reſpect to the Chriſtian Religion, and the Author of it; for he preſerved the Pictures of Chriſt (as well as *Apollonius Tyanæus*) in his Gallery, both which he admired.

SO the Church had a great Breathing Time under the *Antonines*, for though a freſh Perſecution was ſet on foot in their Reigns, yet it ceaſed in a ſhort Time; for they, by a ſharp Edict, chaſtiſed the Fury of the People againſt the Chriſtians, as you may ſee in the Fourth Book of *Euſebius*'s Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, where the Edict is ſet down at length. The Rage which *Septimius Severus* firſt expreſſed againſt the Chriſtians had proceeded further, and made Havock of them, if the Emperor *Caracalla*, and afterward *Alexander Severus*, had not interpoſed, this latter doing it out of Reſpect to his Mother *Mammæa*, who was a Chriſtian, and favoured thoſe of that Profeſſion. It was the good Hand of God to the afflicted Believers, that *Maximinus*, who raiſed the Sixth Perſecution, reigned but three Years, and that after him ſucceeded *Gordianus*, who ſhew'd much Gentleneſs and Courteſy to the Chriſtians. So after *Valerian* had harraſs'd them, *Galienus* came to the Empire, and granted Liberty and Peace to thoſe who had ſo earneſtly pray'd for it. And under *Claudius*, *Quintilius*, *Aurelian*, *Tacitus*, *Florianus*, *Probus*, *Carus*, and his Sons, the Chriſtians were ſuffer'd to live in Peace, and for many Years together, even 'till *Diocleſian*'s Perſecution wholly ceaſed.

2. OBSERVE and admire the Providence of God, in making Uſe of *Perſons* ſo remarkably and *wonderfully* as he did in theſe *Perſecutions*. The firſt, which began under *Nero*, ceaſed under *Veſpaſian*, a kind and loving Emperor, and therefore called the Darling and Delight of Mankind, who ſeemed to be raiſed up by God, to put a Stop to that Fury which *Nero* had inſpir'd the *Pagans* with againſt the Chriſtians. Yet this Man of ſo remarkable Kindneſs and good Nature was moſt ſevere to the *Jews*, and ſack'd their City and laid it waſte, and reduc'd the People to extreme Slavery and Wretchedneſs: This was he that ſeemed to put on another Nature when he dealt with the *Chriſtians*, for he was eminently favourable to them. This is a ſingular Inſtance of the Divine Conduct and Providence, aſcertaining us that the Hearts of Kings and Rulers are in the Hand of God, and that he manages them according to his Pleaſure.

UNDER this Head I might obſerve, that *Commodus*, who was nothing like his Father *Antoninus* the Philoſopher, but was very corrupt in Manners, yet granted Peace to the Chriſtians; for by the over-ruling Hand of God, his Luſt was ſerviceable to their Quiet, he being given up wholly to Pleaſure, and neglecting all other Concerns; or, as *Dio* ſaith, it was not out of Kindneſs to the Chriſtians that he did not perſecute them, but 'twas out of Love to *Marcia*, his Concubine, who mediated in their Behalf. Of all the Emperours 'till *Conſtantine*, he favour'd the Chriſtians moſt, yet otherwiſe was the moſt inhumane and outrageous. So the Emperor *Caracalla*, who ſlew his Brother *Geta*, and then reigned alone, and put *Papinian* the Lawyer to death, becauſe he would not defend his Fratricide, and was extremely vicious every Way, yet ſpared the Chriſtians. *Galienus*, who ſucceeded his Father *Valerian* in the Empire, gave himſelf over to Luſt and Pleaſure, and was deſpiſed and hated by all Men, yet gave out publick Edicts for the Peace and Safety of the Chriſtians. We ſee in what various Methods God is pleaſed to extend Mercy to his Church; he makes uſe of the worſt Men to favour and defend the beſt Cauſe. Some of the vileſt Emperors were kind to the Chriſtians.

I MIGHT here alſo take Notice, that the cruelleſt Emperors and Perſecutors have relented. *Domitian*, being touch'd with Remorſe, put out an Edict to ſtop the Perſecution which he had before begun againſt the Church, as * *Euſebius* relates from *Hegeſippus*; and *Tertullian* tells us, that he call'd back and reſtor'd thoſe Chriſtians whom he had baniſh'd into remote Regions. So when *Maximinus* felt God's Judgment on his Body, he gave Order that the Chriſtians ſhould enjoy the free Profeſſion of their Religion, and have publick Aſſemblies for Worſhip, as the aforeſaid Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorian teſtifies. But this laſted not long, for he became as unmerciful as ever; yet, like another *Pharaoh*, he was brought to ſome penitential Reſentment again, by Famine and Sickneſs which then raged, at which Time the Chriſtians were very officious and helpful to the *Pagans*, and thereby came into Favour, inſomuch that *Maximinus* revok'd his Decree which he had ſet up in Braſs againſt them, and ſoon after all Perſecution vaniſh'd throughout the Empire.

3. I OFFER this Remark, that as ſome of thoſe, who were extremely wicked and profligate, ſpared the Chriſtians, ſo ſome of the mildeſt and meekeſt Emperors, and who were Men of great Morality, were very cruel to them. The gentle *Trajan* was exceſſively rough and inhuman to the Chriſtians for a Time. *Antoninus*, the great moral Philoſopher, who writ ſo bravely, was prevailed with to proſecute the poor Chriſtians; and tho' on the Occaſion abovementioned he ſtopp'd all vigorous Proceedings againſt them, yet afterwards he returned to his former Rigour. *Severus*, who ſtirred up the fifth Perſecution, was a Man of Worth and moral Honeſty, and yet none raged more furiouſly than he againſt Chriſtianity. *Decius* was a wiſe and worthy Emperor; and *Diocleſian* was an excellent Prince, excepting what he did to the Chriſtians, and ruled with great Prudence many Years. Our Popiſh Queen *Mary* was of a merciful Diſpoſition, ſaith an *Engliſh* † Hiſtorian, but we know how fierce ſhe was againſt the Proteſtants in her Realm. Hence it appears, that moral Virtue, good Nature, and civil Honeſty, are not ſufficient to reſtrain the Enmity of Perſons againſt true Godlineſs, and to create in them a Kindneſs for Chriſtianity. It is to be done by a higher Principle, to wit, either true Grace and Virtue, or the over-ruling Hand of God powerfully inclining them, as hath been ſhew'd in the Inſtances before.

4. OBSERVE here, that the Favourableneſs of the Emperors towards Chriſtianity had partly its Riſe from God's Providence in reſtraining the worſt of Men *for a Time*. None was more humble, modeſt, and obliging, at firſt, than *Tiberius*, but afterwards he proved a Monſter *: He vented at laſt all his Vices together, which he had for a conſiderable Time diſſembled, as *Suetonius* notes upon him. So *Caligula* behaved himſelf very commendably at the Beginning of his Reign. And to inſtance in thoſe Emperors, who were Perſecutors of Chriſtianity; *Nero*'s firſt five Years were very peaceable, and he ſeemed to be a kind and compaſſionate Prince, otherwiſe St. *Paul* would not have appealed to him, when he was accuſed before *Feſtus*. This was in the ſecond Year of his Reign, when he had not ſent forth Edicts againſt the Chriſtians. The Apoſtle knew, that it was not Capital by the *Roman* Laws to be a Chriſtian, and therefore he appealed from the inraged *Jews* to the *Roman* Tribunal. Yea, it appears from Hiſtory, that this Emperor gave the Chriſtians no Diſturbance at all for the firſt twelve Years of his Reign. *Domitian* in the Beginning was a merciful Prince, ſaith *Suetonius* in his Life. *Severus* the firſt ten Years was very favourable to the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, but afterwards none raged more furiouſly. *Valerianus*, under whom began the ninth Perſecution continued very mild towards the Chriſtians for the Space of four Years after his coming to the Throne, but in the ſucceeding Part of his Reign he ſhewed himſelf very inhuman towards them. The laſt Perſecution under *Diocleſian* and *Maximian*, was not till the ninth or tenth Year of their Reign. *Maxentius*, at his firſt Entrance on the Empire, made as if he would embrace Chriſtianity, and was very kind to the Chriſtians, ſaith *Euſebius*. Thus by God's Providence Perſecution is hinder'd for a Time: And whereas bloody Princes are prompted by their Natures, and by others Sollicitations to make their whole Reign a continued Scene of Cruelty, it happens frequently, that through Fear of their Subjects and other politick Conſiderations, they ſit quiet for a Time. So Queen *Mary* here in *England* perſecuted none in the

* Hiſt. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 15.

† *Baker*.

* Cuncta ſimul vitia malè diuſimulata tandem profudit. In Vit. *Tiber*.

the firſt Year of her Reign. Cruelty had a Time to reign. The *Roman* Executioners (as one ſaith) were whetting and making ready their Inſtruments of Death.

5. OBSERVE, That the Perſecution under *Diocleſian*, as it was the hotteſt and fierceſt, ſo it was the laſt.

Qui venit hic fluctus, fluctus ſupereminet omnes.

This tenth Wave was moſt boiſterous, but was a happy Forerunner of a Calm, of peaceable and Halcyon Days. When the Perſecution was at the higheſt, it was neareſt its Decay. As it was of old, when the Tale of Bricks was doubled, then *Moſes* appeared as a Deliverer to the People of *Iſrael*; ſo when the Perſecutors raged moſt fiercely againſt the Chriſtians, the Period of their Fury was near at Hand, and a *Conſtantine* ſucceeded a *Diocleſian* and a *Maximinus*. Whence we are taught not to deſpond of God's Goodneſs, but in the Extremity of Miſery to expect the Arrival of Mercy. The utmoſt Rage of the Church's Enemies may be a bleſſed Preſage of their utter Ruin and Deſtruction; as Winds generally, when they are at the higheſt, are ſoon allay'd, and, as it were, breathe out their laſt. And ſo much ſhall ſuffice to have been ſaid concerning the *Ten noted Perſecutions* of the Church of Chriſt under the Pagan Emperors of *Rome*.

BUT now to deſcend lower, *Rome*, that calls itſelf *Chriſtian*, hath outdone the *Pagan* one in all Sorts of Outrages, Bloodſhed and Perſecution. This is *the Woman drunken with the Blood of the Saints and with the Blood of the Martyrs of Jeſus*, Rev. xvii. 6. The Stories of foreign Countries cannot but aſtoniſh us, when we read what Cruelties and Severities have been exerciſed on Perſons, merely for oppoſing the Corruptions of *Rome*. Theſe oppoſe the ſavage Genius of the *Romaniſts*, and almoſt induce us to take the Fable of *Romulus* for a real Truth, that he was ſuckled by a Wolf, ſo fierce and furious are his Off-ſpring. They have lately attempted to ſuppreſs the Proteſtant Religion in *Poland*, *Piedmont*, *Hungary*, the *Palatinate*, by their inhuman Severities towards the Profeſſors of it in thoſe Countries. But the late Perſecution in *France* exceeds all the reſt, where above a hundred thouſand Perſons felt the Shock of their *Dragoons*. It is true, more were killed outright at ſome other Times; but now this was the Enhancement of their Adverſaries Cruelty, that they forced theſe to live, and to endure ſuch lingering Torments and Calamities.

OR, if we confine ourſelves to our Nation, the Reign of the aboveſaid Queen *Mary* is ſufficent to entertain our Thoughts, and to repreſent to us the unparallel'd Cruelties of that Race of Men. This is enough to make *Bonner* and *Gardiner*'s Names execrable to all Poſterity. They ſhall paſs in Hiſtory for Butchers rather than Chriſtian Prelates; and the Places, where ſo much Bloodſhed was contrived, ſeemed to be no longer Palaces, but Slaughter-houſes. Thoſe Days have made the Names of *Cranmer* and *Ridley*, *Latimer* and *Hooper*, *Farrer* and *Bilney*, *Bradford* and *Philpot*, *Tailor* and *Rogers*, and other Servants of God renowned, and they are for ever to be mentioned with Honour and Reverence. Nor are we to remember only theſe Worthies of the firſt Rank, but we might recount (and that with the utmoſt Deteſtation of the inhuman and ſavage Temper of the Papiſts) how all Sorts and Degrees of Perſons were called to the Stake in that Queen's Days, and there in the Face of Men and Angels made a good Confeſſion, and continued ſtedfaſt in the Profeſſion of the Faith. Men and Women, and even Children, flocked to the Flames, and the very Blind and the Lame haſtened thither as faſt as their Infirmities would permit them. There were ſome ſome of every Quality that ſuffered for Chriſt, and the Defence of the Truth: Five Biſhops, one and twenty other Divines, eight Gentlemen, eighty four Tradeſmen and Artificers, a hundred Huſbandmen, Servants, and Labourers, twenty ſix Wives, twenty Widows, nine Virgins, two Boys, and two Infants. The Sum total of them is two hundred ſeventy and ſeven.

THESE were all put to Death within the Compaſs of leſs than four Years, namely in the four laſt Years of Queen *Mary*, for none ſuffered in her firſt Year. Beſides theſe holy *Martyrs* who ſealed the Truth with their Blood, great Numbers were *perſecuted* for the Profeſſion of it: Several were whipped and ſcourged, many were baniſhed, not a few periſhed in Priſon, and were buried in Dunghils. In ſhort, ſuch was the barbarous Cruelty of the Enemy, that the Sufferers *underwent* what we can ſcarcely *here mention*; our Ears refuſe the very Relation of what their whole Bodies endured. And if the very Hiſtory and Narrative be ſo doleful and horrible, then the Thing itſelf was much more ſo. And thus you ſee the firſt Propoſition made good, that it is the Lot of good Men not only to be reviled and ſpoken Evil of, but to be inhumanly dealt with and perſecuted.

IF you enquire into the *Reaſons* of this hard Uſage which holy Men meet with from the vicious and ungodly, you will find them to be ſuch as theſe First, The Nature of the Thing itſelf. 2. That Envy which reigns in the Hearts of the wicked. 3. The Devil's Policy.

Firſt, IN the very Nature and Reaſon of the Thing itſelf, it muſt needs happen that the *Righteous* are evilly treated by the *Wicked*, for theſe two are oppoſite to one another, and this Oppoſition will laſt as long as there is a Contrariety of Virtue to Vice, and of Holineſs to Unholineſs. *Cain, who was of that wicked one, ſlew his Brother*, and this Reaſon is given, *Becauſe his own Works were evil and his Brother's righteous*, 1 John iii. 12. Good and evil Works being *contrary*, it follows, that the Perſons who are the Doers of them muſt be ſo too; wherefore 'tis ſaid in the Words immediately enſuing, *Marvel not, my Brethren, if the World hate you*; it is no Wonder that they hate you, becauſe of your contrary Nature. When we read that *Jacob* and *Eſau* were early Combatants, and fought before they were born, it was deſigned, without doubt, to ſhew the implacable Hatred and Oppoſition, not only of thoſe two individual Perſons, but of the whole Race of Believers and Unbelievers; for what Communion hath Light with Darkneſs, Chriſt with Belial? There is nothing but Enmity between the Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent. *As he that was born after the Fleſh perſecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even ſo it is now*, ſaith the Apoſtle in his Time, *Gal.* iv. 29. And where is it not ſo at this Day? As long as the World is peopled with vicious Men, this Hatred and Perſecution will laſt; it is entail'd, and it is in vain to think of its being cut off. This is excellently repreſented by the Apocryphal Writer, *Wiſd.* ii. 12, *&c. Let us lie in wait for the Righteous, becauſe he is not for our Turn, and he is clear contrary to our Doings*; we can't make him do as we would, he ſpoils all our Deſigns. It follows, *He upbraideth us with our offending the Law, he was made to reprove our Thoughts.* We can't be prophane and wicked but he obſerves it, and is ready to check and curb us for it; therefore *he is grievous unto us, even to behold*, we can't endure ſo much as to ſee a godly Man, our Hearts riſe againſt him, becauſe (as is added in the next Words) *his Life is not like other Mens, his Ways are of another Faſhion.*

THIS vaſt Contrariety muſt needs produce as great an Antipathy, eſpecially, if a good Man undertakes to *reprove* the Sins that prevail in the World, he certainly derives an Odium on himſelf, and the Effect of it will be Reviling and Perſecution. When that renowned Servant of God, *Martin Luther*, began to lay open the groſs Corruptions of the *Roman* Church, never any Man was more traduced and abuſed. Therefore *Eraſmus* rightly told the Duke of *Saxony*, that *Luther*'s two great Faults were, his touching the *Pope*'s Crown and the *Monks* Bellies, that is, his ſtriking at the Pride and Lazineſs of the Church-men: It was this that raiſed the Outcry and Perſecution againſt him. Contraries cannot agree; there is an Enmity between the Holy and the Unholy, by Reaſon of their oppoſite Natures. To this Purpoſe, *Sulpitius Severus* (a Chriſtian Prieſt, and Author of the *Sacred Hiſtory*) ſpeaking of *Nero*, hath theſe remarkable Words *, He was the firſt, ſaith he, that endeavoured to root out the Chriſtian Name and Religion, and it is no Wonder, for Vice is always an Enemy to Virtue, and thoſe that are Good and Holy, do, by their exemplary Lives, as it were, upbraid the Wicked. This is one Spring of that Hatred, and (which is the Conſequence of Hatred) that Perſecution which good Men are liable to.

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* Hic primus Chriſtianum Nomen tollere aggreſſus eſt; quippe ſemper inimica virtutibus vitia ſunt, & optimi quique ab improbis quaſi exprobrantes aſpiciuntur. Lib. 2.

Secondly, ENVY is the Root of this ill Treatment. Righteous Perſons are God's Favourites, and on that Account they are envied, and conſequently ſlander'd and reproach'd, and unkindly uſed by the World. *Abel*, the firſt Martyr in the World, fell a Sacrifice to *Cain*'s Envy; namely, becauſe *Abel*'s Oblation was accepted by God, and not *Cain*'s. *Joſeph* was dear to his Father, and then it was no Wonder he was hated of his wicked Brethren. *Jacob*'s Love cauſed *their* Abhorrence of him; his Affection and Kindneſs were the Parent of their Spite. Mark our Saviour's Words to this Purpoſe, in *John* xv. 19. *If ye were of the World, the World would love its own, but becauſe you are not of the World, but I have choſen you out of the World, therefore the World hate you.* If we be the Friends of God, the vicious World will preſently proclaim itſelf our deadly Enemy, and give us continual Proofs of its Spite and Malice. Goodneſs creates Ill-will in bad Men, and ſtirs Hatred in their Minds. All Records acquaint us, that the braveſt Men have been moſt unworthily treated. The *Iſraelites* were ready to ſtone *Moſes*, who had conducted them out of *Egypt*, and had every Way deſerved well of them: And they talk'd of doing the like to *David*, after all his Care and Pains for the Publick. And there is abundance of other Hiſtory to prove that thoſe of the moſt ſhining Virtues have been moſt obſcured; and the Reaſon is plain, becauſe *Envy* purſues the beſt Actions, and the greateſt Worth begets Ill-will: Hence 'tis dangerous to deſerve too well, and Merit is the Way to Ruin.

Thirdly, THE *Devil*, as well as the World, conſpires toward the Perſecution of good Men. We read in *Rev.* xii. 13. that *the great red Dragon perſecuted the Woman*, and when ſhe fled into the Wilderneſs, he followed her, and there *caſt out of his Mouth Waters as a Flood*, v. 15. to drown her; and when he could not effect that, he ceaſed not *to make War with the Remnant of her Seed.* Perſecution is a Work of the Devil: He is inflam'd with Malice, and enrag'd with the utmoſt Hatred againſt the Servants of God, and thence he is ſtirr'd up to blaſt their Names, and to hurt and endamage their Perſons, and every Way to bring Miſchief upon them. Wicked Men, being inſpired and actuated by this apoſtate Spirit, are mad in their Purſuit againſt them, like thoſe *Jews* againſt Chriſt, who being ask'd by *Pilate*, *what Evil he had done*, returned this Anſwer, *Let him be crucified:* Their Deſign and Aim was to have him ſuffer Death, and they would not trouble themſelves with knowing whether he deſerved it or not. *Crucify him, crucify him* was the Cry, and ſo it is to this very Day; thoſe, that hate good and holy Men, are moved by Satan to ſend them out of the World, for they are reputed by them a Catholick Nuiſance, a general Grievance to Mankind.

THUS I have fully and amply finiſhed the firſt Propoſition which the Words furniſh us with, and I have aſſigned the true Reaſons and Grounds for it. The Application of the Whole ſhall be in theſe two Particulars.

1. THINK not ſtrange concerning the Fiery Trial, the Trial of Reproaches and Perſecutions: Chriſtianity hath, ever ſince its appearing in the World, been oppoſed by Men of evil Principles and Deſigns. The Atheiſt, the Enthuſiaſt and the Prophane have always bandied againſt it; the Atheiſt flatly denies it, the Enthuſiaſt ſoars above it, and the Prophane decide it. It is not ſo much as owned by the firſt, it is perverted by the ſecond, and it is made a Mock of by the laſt How can it be then but that the true Profeſſors of Chriſtianity ſhould be expoſed. to Contempt, and all Manner of Injuries? The Saints are made a *Spectacle to the World*, 1 Cor. iv. 9. they are brought on the *Theatre* (which is the Word the Apoſtle uſes) like the Gladiators, they fight with Beaſts, they grapple with cruel and ſavage Enemies. But let not this ſeem *ſtrange* unto you; this is a Thing which the Holy Scripture hath foretold, and which Chriſt himſelf forewarns us of: And indeed if you conſider Things right, you cannot expect any other Uſage; for you are Strangers and Pilgrims, and travel in the Enemy's Country, and how can you promiſe yourſelves Safety? Nay rather, you can look for nothing but Affronts and Injuries. Inſtead of wondering at this, be providing yourſelves for it; which is the next Inference from the Premiſes.

2. PREPARE for Affronts and Reproaches, Revilings and Ignominies, and even Death itſelf. It would not be amiſs to ſuppoſe and imagine theſe ſometimes to be preſent before they come. Converſe with Pain, Poveety, Reproach at a

Diſtance; [*] for the main Cauſe of all our Sorrow and Reſtleſſneſs of Mind, under the great Calamities which befal us is this, that theſe happen *unexpectedly* to us. Wherefore it is [†] true Philoſophy, even according to the Definition that one who was well verſed in it hath given, To be prepared againſt every Event. We ſhould make leſſer Hardſhips and Difficulties ourſelves, by ſmaller Skirmiſhes and lighter Combats, for the great Battle and the more furious Shock: By little and little we muſt take up our Burden, and ſo we ſhall bear it the better. We read that that holy Martyr Mr. *Bilney*, when he thought he ſhould be burnt at the Stake, uſed to put his Finger into the Candle, to try how he could endure that Pain. In a reſembling Manner be you always fitting your ſelves for Suffering and Perſecution, be in Readineſs to entertain the Croſs. There have been great Perſecutions, and there may be great ones ſtill, and perhaps greater. Let me tell you, you may have the Honour to be Martyrs or Confeſſors for the Cauſe of Chriſt. It is a remarkable Paſſage of *Plato*, which *Grotius* quotes out of him, ſpeaking of a truly virtuous Man, and the Calamities which attend him; thus he expreſſes himſelf, That he may be known and exhibited to be a juſt and good Man, there is a Kind of a Neceſſity that he be whipt and tortured, and bound, and his Eyes burnt out; and when they have done all, that he be diſpatch'd out of the World. This was the Senſe even of a *Pagan* Philoſopher: And thoſe, that have read any thing of the Chriſtian Tranſactions in the World, muſt acknowledge the Truth of what he ſaith. We are told on what hard Terms the primitive Chriſtians maintain'd the Practice of their Religion. They choſe to embrace Chriſtianity, and defend the Truths of the Goſpel, when the moſt barbarous and bloody Tyrants thirſted after their Lives, and reſolved to make them a Sacrifice to their Fury. They made their Way through Torments of all Sorts, and even through Death it ſelf. When Religion was thus dangerous, they bred up their Children in the Rudiments of the Chriſtian Faith, and made them acknowledge, and publickly profeſs all its Articles. Let not then any Difficulties diſhearten you, but entertain them with the Spirit of a Chriſtian; and let not the Love of Life, or Fear of Death, divert you from your proper Duty, eſpecially when you conſider that you ſuffer *for Righteouſneſs ſake*.

AND ſo I paſs to the *ſecond Obſervation* on the Words, *viz.* That thoſe, who ſuffer Revilings and Perſecutions, muſt look to this, that it be *for Righteouſneſs ſake*, and *for Chriſt's ſake*. That you ſee is the Limitation of our Saviour's Beatitude here, for 'tis certain, that no Bleſſedneſs can belong to them, who ſuffer for the Wickedneſs of their Doings. That Man muſt not bemoan himſelf as a *perſecuted* Perſon, who hath brought the Calamity on his Head by by his own Default and wilful Miſcarriage. If we ſuffer, it muſt be *for Righteouſneſs ſake*; which is expreſſed in other Terms in other Places of Scripture, as in 1 *Pet.* ii. 19. *For Conſcience towards God endure Grief, ſuffering wr ngfully*, and *v.* 20. *doing well and ſuffering for it:* And *chap.* iv. 14. being *reproached for the Name of Chriſt*; and *v.* 16. *ſuffering as a Chriſtian*, and *v.* 19. *ſuffering according to the Will of God.* This explains what our Saviour calls *being perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake*, and *for his ſake.* Which implies in it theſe following Things.

1. THAT we ſuffer it with a *good Conſcience.* Accordingly it is requiſite that we be rightly *informed* concerning the Thing we ſuffer for; we are to uſe all lawful Means to attain to the Knowledge of our Duty in our particular Circumſtances. We muſt read the Holy Scriptures with great Diligence and great Humility, we muſt lay aſide all Prejudice and Paſſion, we muſt earneſtly pray to be guided and inſtructed in the Way wherein we ſhould walk, we muſt enquire into the Nature of it, with great Sincerity; and by ſuch Methods as theſe, we ſhall arrive to rectified Apprehenſions, and an impartial and ſettled Conſcience, which is abſolutely neceſſary to that *Suffering* which the Text ſpeaks of.

2. THIS is always meant in the Duty of *ſuffering for Righteouſneſs ſake*, that we ſuffer for ſuch a *Cauſe* as will bear us out. The Cauſe makes the Martyr, and the Conſcience cannot be good if the Cauſe be bad, nay if it be mean and trivial. To ſuffer for every little Opinion and Conceit deſerves not the Title of Martyrdom. He ſuffers for Righteouſneſs ſake, and for Chriſt's ſake, who undergoes the utmoſt Hardſhips in Defence of the eſſential and fundamental

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[*] πᾶν καὶ ὅλον ἐστὶν εἰς λύπην καὶ ἀθυμίαν τὸ ἀπροσδόκητον. Plut. de animæ tranquillitate.

[†] τὸ δὲ φιλοσοφῆσαι τί ἐστιν; οὐχὶ παρασκευάσασθαι πρὸς τὰ συμβαίνοντα; Arian. l. 3. c, 10.

Truths of Chriſtanity, ſuch as really conduce to the Edification of the Church of Chriſt, ſuch as the Chriſtians in all Ages have aſſerted, ſuch as the primitive Saints ſhed their Blood for. It was the real Goodneſs of their Cauſe which upheld and ſupported them, and made them triumph over all their Enemies. So it will be now, we may ſuffer with Joy, when we do it for the Defence of the Chriſtian Religion. We muſt die a thouſand Deaths (if it were poſſible) rather than renounce the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, rather than act contrary to the Will and Word of God. *Whether it be fitter to obey God or Man, judge ye*, ſaid the Apoſtles to their Judges. Nothing can diſpenſe with God's Law and Commandment. No Prince or Prelate can interpoſe here; all Injunctions muſt give Way to this.

YOU may gather hence, whether thoſe who ſuffered in Queen *Mary*'s Days were true Martyrs, *i. e.* ſuffered for Righteouſneſs ſake. Yea, certainly there were, for they ſuffered for oppoſing the Superſtitions of the Church of *Rome*; for diſallowing Prayers in an unknown Tongue; for not conſenting to the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, that is, the Change of the Bread and Wine in the Sacrament into Chriſt's Body and Blood; for declaring againſt Images, and the worſhipping of them; againſt Prayers to the Virgin *Mary* and other Saints and Angels; and for ſpeaking and acting againſt other groſs Corruptions and idolatrous Practices of the Papiſts: For theſe they were hurried to the Flames, and there bore Teſtimony to the Truth of Chriſt. Who then can doubt that they ſuffered *for Chriſt's ſake*, and that *they died in the Lord*, as 'tis ſaid of thoſe Saints in *Rev.* xiv. 13? For though 'tis true in the large Senſe, all Chriſtian Believers are comprehended here; all holy and righteous Men, who keep the Faith, and ſo finiſh their Chriſtian Courſe, may be ſaid *to die in the Lord*; the ſame with thoſe in 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 16. *the dead in Chriſt*; yet thoſe more emphatically and ſtrictly are ſaid to *die in the Lord*, who *die for him*; for ſo the Prepoſition ἐν is ſometimes taken, and is of the ſame Import with *propter*, as in *Rom.* xvi. 2. *in the Lord*, that is, *for his ſake*; and in 1 *Cor.* xv. 18. *they which are fallen aſleep in Chriſt*, that is, thoſe holy Men, who laid down their Lives for Chriſt, who ſealed the Truth with their Blood. So 'tis probable, that the Text now before us refers to thoſe pious Chriſtians that ſuffered Martyrdom; they died *in the Lord*, that is, for his Sake, for his Cauſe.

3. TO ſuffer *for Righteouſneſs ſake* is in ſome Things, and at ſome Times, to chuſe rather to ſuffer, than to offend our Brethren. My Meaning is, that where we are not pre-obliged and determined by other Laws, we muſt conſult the Satisfaction of our weak Brethren, tho' it be to our Reproach and Damage. If St. *Paul* was willing to be *accuſed* for his Brethrens ſake, ſurely he would have been content to *ſuffer*, in a leſſer Degree at leaſt, for them. And this being a great Inſtance of Chriſtian Love and Charity, we may conclude, that it is Suffering for Righteouſneſs ſake.

4. TO ſuffer for Righteouſneſs ſake is to ſuffer from a right Principle, with upright Intentions, and for juſt Ends, namely, God's Glory, the promoting of Religion, and giving Teſtimony to the Truth. The inward Spring of all muſt be entire *Love to God*. If the holy Man be actuated by this holy Fire, he will ruſh into the hotteſt Flames; and this he would do, tho' there were no Body to look on, and to applaud him for his Courage. This is to ſuffer *for Jeſus ſake*, and *for his Name* (as 'tis expreſſed in other Places) not for our own Name, not to get Repute and Applauſe from Men, not out of a Principle of Self-Glory and Oſtentation. *Tho' I give my Body to be burnt*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *and have not Charity, or Love*, (for ſo it ſhould rather be rendered) *it profiteth me nothing*: Tho' I defend the beſt Cauſe with my Blood, and do it not out of a ſincere Affection to God and to the Truth, it will avail me nothing. The moſt voluntary yielding my ſelf to the Flames is but a ſorry Oblation without this. A vain-glorious Heretick may ſubmit himſelf to the Gibbet, or any other Way of Dying, that he may propagate his Sect, and purchaſe the Title of Martyr: But behold! his Principle is baſe and his Deſigns unworthy, and therefore the pleaſing himſelf with the vain Applauſe of his ſeduced Party is all the Reward he ſhall have.

THE only *Uſe* then, which I make of this ſecond Propoſition, is this; let us look to it, that, when we are reviled and perſecuted, it be for a good Conſcience and a good Cauſe, and on right Principles and Ends; and then we may defy the Threats of the World, and we may reſt ſatisfied in the Integrity of our Hearts, which will ſufficiently vouch us. This ought to be diligently heeded, otherwiſe we ſhall venture unadviſedly, and involve ourſelves in unneceſſary Troubles. Let no Man be miſtaken, it is not his Suffering, mere Suffering, which renders him acceptable in the Eyes of God. There are many that undergo great Torments here, and ſhall ſuffer much greater hereafter. * *Euſebius* tells us, that the *Marcionites* and *Montaniſts* uſed to brag, that they had many Martyrs, and that this was a certain Argument of the Truth of their Cauſe. The *Circumcellians* (another antient Sort of Hereticks) boaſted of their Catalogue of Martyrs. The *Manichees* gloried in their Perſecutions; ſo did the *Donatiſts*, who (as St. *Auguſtine* acquaints us) thought and ſpoke highly of themſelves on that Account. Yea, *Mahomet* taught his Diſciples, that he who dies in Battel againſt the Chriſtians goes to Heaven aſſuredly. And I find that this Doctrine was older than *Mahometiſm*, for *Plato*, in his 5th Book of the Commonwealth, would have all who die valiantly in the Field to be canonized. And I read, that *Heraclitus* of old was a great Admirer of all that were *'Αρηΐφατοι ſlain in Battel*, let their Cauſe be what it would; his Opinion was, that they deſerved a ſignal Honour. And *Phocas*, who came to be Emperor by the Murder of his Maſter, earneſtly endeavoured to make a Law, whereby all that died in the Wars ſhould be reverenced as Martyrs. But theſe were Dreams of Vanity and Ignorance, for 'tis not barely loſing a Man's Life, nor the moſt courageous Suffering of Death, that can give the Denomination of a Martyr. Hiſtories of all Ages inform us, that the wilful Ringleaders of Sects have embraced their Sufferings with a wonderful Conſtancy and Courage. *Vanini*, the *Italian* Atheiſt, was burnt alive, in the Year 1618, for holding there is neither God nor Devil; and the Hiſtorian, who records this, takes Notice, that he died undauntedly and courageouſly; yet it is not to be queſtioned, but that this poor Wretch, who acknowledged no Devil, died his Martyr. To conclude this Head then, let it be our main Care, that we ſuffer for a good Cauſe, and to ſecure an innocent Conſcience, and then (and not otherwiſe) we may lay claim to the *Bleſſedneſs* in the Text.

* Hiſt. Eccl. l. 5. c. 15.

WHICH brings me to the third Propoſition, That Chriſtians ſuffering for Righteouſneſs ſake, and for Obedience to Chriſt's Commands, tho' they undergo the moſt grievous Things in their Bodies and Eſtates, are really *Bleſſed*. That we may not queſtion it, it is twice here aſſerted, *Bleſſed are they which are perſecuted: Bleſſed are ye when Men ſhall revile you and perſecute you.* And we have the very ſame repeated by St. *Peter*, 1 *Epiſt. chap.* iii. *v.* 14. *If ye ſuffer for Righteouſneſs ſake, happy are ye.* Again, *chap.* iv. *v.* 14. *If ye be reproached for the Name of Chriſt, happy are ye.* But how this can be, we are now to enquire. It is certain, that Perſecution, abſolutely and ſimply conſidered is no Bleſſing, but rather a Curſe, and to be prayed againſt. The Chriſtian Church of old was heard to groan under Tyrants and Perſecutors, and to beg for Deliverance. But tho' Perſecution, in itſelf barely conſidered, carries not Bleſſedneſs along with it, yet it will appear, that they, who are perſecuted and reviled for Chriſt's ſake are really bleſſed; and that upon theſe following Conſiderations.

1. BECAUSE in this Life they are often bleſſed with outward and temporal Favours. The Servants of God, who have endured Puniſhments and Torments, for the Defence of their Religion, have met with extraordinary Reſpect and Honour from Men, and they have been rewarded even in this World. The greateſt and nobleſt Perſons have reverenced the Perſecuted. *Euſebius* in his *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory* relates how the Emperor *Conſtantine* the Great kiſs'd the old Father *Paphnutius*, and admired that Face out of which the Tyrant *Maximian* had cauſed one of his Eyes to be bored; he told him he honoured the very Socket, where ſo lovely a Light had once ſhined. *Athanaſius* in Defence of the Faith ſuffered extraordinarily, but as he was five times baniſhed, ſo he had five Returns home, and at laſt died in *Alexandriá* (where he was Biſhop) in Peace and Honour.

2. THE Perſecuted are *Bleſſed*, becauſe they are in a more than ordinary Manner honoured with the Preſence of the Almighty, and with the divine Love and Favour. What elſe can that ſharp Interrogatory in *Acts* ix. 5. *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* import but this, that God himſelf ſuffers with

his Servants? They never are in Diſtreſs; but he ſympathizes with them; and (as the Conſequent of that) ſtands by them, and comforts them, as he did, that choſen Veſſel St. *Paul.* Now is the Time, that they have Experience of the extraordinary Kindneſs of God to them. *As the Sufferings of Chriſt abound in them, ſo their Conſolation alſo aboundeth by Chriſt,* 2 Cor. i. 5. Their Communion with Chriſt their Head is not interrupted, but unſpeakably augmented. The Hardſhips they lie under are ſo far from intercepting the Love of God to them, that they increaſe it. Now they have the ſpecial Eye of God's Providence caſt on them; now there is a greater Meaſure of God's Spirit poured forth upon them than at other Times; now St. *Peter*'s Words are verified, *The Spirit of Glory and of God reſteth upon them,* 1 Pet. iv. 14. This enables them to bear up againſt the moſt grievous Oppreſſures, and to thrive under them.

Now they unriddle the Meaning of the ancient Viſion of *the burning Buſh not conſumed:* Now they ſee one of the Reaſons why the Church is ſtiled *the Lilly among the Thorns,* Cant. ii. 2. They flouriſh in the midſt of their Perſecutors, and maugre all the Malice of their implacable Enemies. Their Motto is rightly given them by St. *Paul, Troubled on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſed; perplexed, but not in Deſpair; perſecuted, but not forſaken; caſt down, but not deſtroyed,* 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9. This is the Reſult of the Divine Aſſiſtance and Support, which they have in their greateſt Dangers. The compaſſionate *Jehovah* ſupplies them with continual Solaces, and effectually ſaith to their Souls, as he did heretofore to St. *Paul, Be of good Chear.* Who then can deny they are *Bleſſed?*

3. THESE Sufferings and Perſecutions are ſo far from hindring the Exerciſe of the Graces of good Men, that they are effectual Means of furthering them, and of promoting their Bleſſedneſs. They are fit Inſtruments to work in them Piety and Holineſs. This I have enlarged upon when I diſcourſed of the *Benefits of Affliction,* and therefore I remit the Reader thither. The Sum of what has been ſaid, under theſe three ſhort Heads, is compriſed in thoſe Words of our Saviour, *There is no Man that hath left Houſe, or Brethren, or Siſters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands, for my ſake and the Goſpel, but he ſhall receive a hundred Fold now in this time, Houſes, and Brethren, and Siſters and Mothers, and Children and Lands with Perſecutions, Mark* x. 29, 30. That is, thoſe that are Loſers, as to outward and worldly Advantages, ſhall ſometimes be recompenſed even in that Reſpect, but, however, they ſhall be abundantly recompenſed, as to Spiritual and Divine Bleſſings, the Favour of God and the Increaſe of their Gifts and Graces, which are here very fitly call'd *Houſes, and Brethren, and Siſters,* &c. becauſe they are in the Place of them, and ſo they have that Denomination. This, I conceive, is the beſt Reſolution of our Saviour's Words, though Expoſitors generally labour to ſolve them another Way, but not without ſome Inconſiſtence with the Context. The ſhort is, The *Sufferings* which the Godly endure are for their Profit and Advantage, and contribute to their Happineſs in this Life. But beſides the *preſent* Felicity which attends the Perſecuted in this World, there is a *future* one which is reſerv'd for them in the World to come, *for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* On which I found the

Fourth Obſervation, THAT tho' good Men ſuffer never ſo much in this Life, they ſhall be made amends in another; *Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven,* and again, *great is your Reward in Heaven.* As to the former, *the Kingdom of Heaven,* 1. It is *theirs* in Right and Title now, as the Heir hath a Title and Claim to the Eſtate which afterward he ſhall poſſeſs. 2. It is *theirs* in Part now, for great is the Beginning of Glory. 3. In a ſhort time it is *theirs* in Actual Poſſeſſion and Fruition. Heaven is the Place for thoſe that have been perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake.

IT is further added, *Great is their Reward in Heaven,* which is another Manner of our Saviour's expreſſing the *Bleſſedneſs* of thoſe that are killed and perſecuted. Firſt, this Reward is great in itſelf. Heaven is no mean Attainment. It is ſet forth in the Holy Stile by *Crowns* and *Kingdoms,* and the World doth not count theſe mean and contemptible. Heaven is the ſatisfying of all our vaſt Deſires, it is the Gratification of all our Faculties, and the Upſhot of all our Wiſhes. Secondly, This Reward is not only, in itſelf and in its own Nature, *Great,* but it is ſo likewiſe, if *compared* with that Reward which other Chriſtians, who have *not ſuffered,* ſhall receive. If there be Degrees of Glory in Heaven (as Scripture and

Reaſon give us Ground to believe) then thoſe, who have been *revil'd and perſecuted*, ſhall be dignified with more weighty and more ſplendid Crowns than thoſe which other Saints ſhall wear. For

1. God's Goodneſs and Bounty will proportion their Reward to the Nature of their Sufferings. As it is ſaid of that *Babyloniſh* Strumpet, [*By how much ſhe hath lived deliciouſly, by ſo much the more let her Plagues be increaſed*] ſo the Rule is as reaſonable, and the Proportion as accountable, on the other Hand; great Sufferings ſhall find an exceeding great Reward. But

2. Not only God's Goodneſs and Mercy are engaged, but the very Nature of the thing itſelf acquaints us, that our preſent Sadneſſes will inhanſe our future Joys. We experience it in earthly Enterprizes and Affairs, that the greater the Difficulty is which we meet with, the greater is the Satisfaction of the Atchievement. In like ſort, the Happineſs hereafter muſt needs be very conſiderable, the Purchaſe whereof was attended with ſo many preſent Hazards.

THE *Deductions*, which naturally ariſe from what hath been ſaid of the *Bleſſed State* of ſuch as ſuffer for Righteouſneſs ſake are ſuch as theſe,

Firſt, IF Chriſt pronounces thoſe Perſons *Bleſſed*, let them be ſo in our Thoughts and Eſteem of them. Precious in the Sight of the Lord are the Suffering and Death of his Saints: There is good Reaſon they ſhould be the ſame in *our* Eyes. I call not upon you to worſhip them (for that is to be abhorr'd) but it is lawful, and no leſs than their Duty, to pay Reſpect and Reverence to their Memories. The Name of *Martyr* is a Glorious Name, a *Name* given at the *Baptiſm of Blood*, as others are at the Baptiſm of Water. The Ignominies and Slanders which Men caſt upon them are Badges of Honour, and Marks of their real Worth. Let us acknowledge them to be ſuch, and let us bleſs God particularly for the exemplary Lives and Sufferings of theſe primitive Chriſtians, who, when they were taken notice of by the Heathen Powers for their Religion, were not aſhamed to make open Profeſſion of it; when they were apprehended, they labour'd not to eſcape; when they were queſtion'd, they freely confeſs'd; when they were condemned, they gave Thanks; when they ſuffer'd, they gloried in the Croſs of Chriſt. No Torments could fright them, no Rewards could bribe them, but they ſtood conſtant and reſolv'd in the Defence of Chriſtianity, maugre all the Threats and Promiſes of their Adverſaries: Yea, by their unwearied Patience and undaunted Courage, they even wearied their Perſecutors and tired their Tormentors.

Secondly, IF the Perſecuted be Bleſſed and Happy, then we may rationally infer what is the Condition of *Perſecutors*, namely, that it is moſt *Miſerable*. Tho' in outward Appearance they proſper, there is a real Curſe attending them; and thoſe, who torment others, are inwardly tormented themſelves with the Horrors of a profligate Conſcience. Yea, many of them meet with an outward and viſible Puniſhment, as *Antiochus Epiphanes*, (as the Book of *Maccabees* reports) both the *Herods*, as well he that kill'd the Infants, as the other who put *John Baptiſt* to Death (as *Joſephus* relates) *Maximinus* (as *Euſebius* tells us) and many others. Few of the firſt *Roman* perſecuting Emperors died in their Beds. I might deſcend to Modern Examples, and ſhew that Perſecution hath proved fatal to the Perſecutors themſelves: And more particularly there is abundant Hiſtory, to prove that Divine Vengeance hath overtaken the Perſecutors of poor Proteſtants. Some of them have been miſerably alarm'd and frighted from Heaven, and they have cried out and bemoaned their uneaſy and woful Condition: Others, ſtruck by the Hand of God, have run mad and raving: And not a few have felt intolerable Pains and and Tortures in their Bodies, a juſt Puniſhment for thoſe which they inflicted on the Innocent.

Thirdly, SURELY then we may further infer, that we ought to be careful that *we* be not of the Number of theſe wretched Men. There will ever be ſome that will gratify Tyrants in their cruel Humour and bloody Diſpoſition, as they ſay *Perillus*, to pleaſe *Phalaris*, preſented him with a brazen Bull, as an Inſtrument of exquiſite Torment. *Ulpian* (otherwiſe a very worthy Perſon and a great Civil Lawyer) wrote a Book wherein he particularly ſet down the ſeveral Kinds of Puniſhments and Tortures, wherewith the *Roman* Emperors had plagued the Chriſtians, and he did it with this Deſign, namely, to ſtir up the Emperor *Severus* (whoſe Tutor he was) to make uſe of thoſe Methods and Arts of tormenting the Chriſtians, and to teach the reſt of the Emperors how they ſhould puniſh thoſe Men.

But theſe were *Pagans*, and no better could be expected from them. But how horrid is it for *Chriſtians* to perſecute one another? Upon this Account how deteſtable is the Name of *Arians*, who were the firſt that call'd on the Chriſtan Emperors to perſecute their Orthodox Brethren? *Euſebius*, *Macedonius*, *Lucibius*, *George* of *Alexandria*, who were Biſhops, are mentioned for this. *Syrianus* and *Sebaſtian*, great Commanders, and the Emperors *Conſtantius* and *Valens*, are noted on this Account, for theſe were the Perſons who began to puniſh the Orthodox Chriſtians with Baniſhment, Impriſonment, Confiſcation, and even Death it ſelf. And the ſame inhumane Uſage hath prevail'd ſince, and in a higher Degree in the Church of *Rome*: And I wiſh I could add that it hath not found Place even among ſome Proteſtants. But certainly nothing can be more ſhameful and diſhonourable than this, whatever theſe Men may think. I remember my Lord *Coke* upon *Littleton* notes, that the *Worſt* ſort of *Tenures* is to hold Lands by being an *Executioner* or *Slaughter-Man*. It is undoubtedly the moſt diſgraceful Character that a Church can bear, to perſecute, harraſs, torment, ſlaughter, and put to Death.

Think ſeriouſly of this, and live in Abhorrence and Deteſtation of ſuch Men. Be never guilty of this Madneſs, be not inſtrumental in perſecuting any good Man, remembring that what Indignities and Injuries are done to Chriſt's Members, are reckoned as done to himſelf: The Sufferings of the Faithful are Chriſt's Sufferings, and he will avenge them. And there is this likewiſe to be conſidered, which we ſhould not have thought of, unleſs our Saviour had ſuggeſted it to us, and confirmed us in the Truth of it, namely, that by our abuſing and injuring the Servants of Chriſt, we contract the Guilt of *all the Injuries* that have been done to him and them. Thus we find that the *Phariſees*, having the ſame cruel and bloody Principles with their Forefathers, were interpreted to be guilty of *their* Bloodſhed: *That upou you may come all the righteous Blood ſhed upon the Earth, from the Blood of righteous Abel unto the Blood of Zacharias*, &c. Mat. xxiii. v. 35. Their preſent perſecuting Spirit, and eſpecially their malicious perſecuting of Chriſt derived upon them the Guilt of all the Blood ſhed in ſo many Generations. Wherefore perſecute not righteous Men, either in your Heart, or with your Tongues, or your Hands; not in your Heart, by contemning and deſpiſing them, by Hatred, Envy, or ill Will; not with your Tongue, by reviling and railing, by ſlandering and reproaching them; not with your Hands, by Cruelty, Tyranny, and Violence. *Have nothing to do with theſe juſt Men*, as *Pilate* was adviſed by his Wife, when Chriſt was brought before him.

THIRDLY, if thoſe that are reviled and perſecuted for Righteouſneſs Sake are *Bleſſed*, and amply *rewarded in Heaven*, then this is ſufficient Encouragement to all thoſe who ſuffer thus, to bear all the Inſults of the prophane World with undaunted Patience, and even with Joy and Gladneſs. Which directly brings me to the

Fifth and laſt Propoſition founded on this Text, *viz.* That a good Man, tho' reviled and abuſed, ought to rejoice. *Rejoice and be exceeding glad.* Firſt, *Rejoice*; that may denote the inward Emotions of Joy in the Mind. Then, *be exceeding glad*, which may ſignify to us the outward Expreſſions and Demonſtrations of Joy which are obſerved in a holy Man: His Countenance and Deportment are chearful, whilſt he refreſhes his Thoughts with the abundant Reward laid up for him in Heaven. This made the Apoſtles, when they had been beaten and ſcourged for the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, *rejoice that they were counted worthy to ſuffer Shame for Chriſt's Name.* Acts. v. 41.

TO ſay all in one Word, if *Bleſſedneſs* be entailed (as here 'tis) on thoſe that are perſecuted for doing their Duty, they have abundant Reaſon not to be dejected at it, but to encourage themſelves in the Lord, and rejoice and triumph in all their Difficulties and Dangers. Wherefore if God ſhall honour any of us, ſo far as to call us to ſuffer for his Sake, let us extol the Divine Goodneſs which vouchſafes thus to exerciſe our Graces, and to place us in a Condition, wherein we ſhall have *Experience* of the greateſt Evidences of God's Favour to us; and by Vertue of which we ſhall be *Bleſſed* here, and crown'd with a *great Reward in Heaven.*

I MUST in the laſt Place take Notice of one Paſſage more mentioned in this *Beatitude* by our Saviour, on Purpoſe, without doubt, to excite and animate us to the preſent Duty; for after he had ſaid, *Rejoice and be exceeding glad*, he adds, *For ſo perſecuted they the Prophets which were before you*; ſo they dealt with all the holy Men in all Ages of the World. This is adjoined by Chriſt to the Cloſe of this Beatitude, that Chriſtians in future Ages might not be diſcouraged when they meet with the ſame hard Uſage, the like Calumnies and Reproaches, which the Servants of the Moſt High underwent before. We muſt remember this, that, by our ſuffering for Righteouſneſs Sake, we are made conformable to the Saints and righteous Perſons, in all paſt Times of the World, who ſuffered Perſecution: Some of whoſe Sufferings are thus repreſented by the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, Chap. xi. *They were tortured, not accepting Deliverance, they had Trial of cruel Mockings and Scourgings*; *yea, moreover of Bonds and Impriſonments: They were ſtoned, they were ſawn aſunder, were tempted, were ſlain with the Swoed, they wandered about in Sheep-Skins and Goat-Skins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the World was not worthy: They wandered in Deſerts and Mountains, and in Dens and Caves of the Earth.* And for the holy Men under the New Teſtament, the ſame Apoſtle acquaints us with their Condition, 1 Cor. iv. 9. *&c.* *We are Fools for Chriſt's Sake, we are weak, we are deſpiſed, even to this preſent Hour we both hunger and thirſt, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling Place, and labour working with our Hands*; *being reviled, we bleſs*; *being perſecuted, we ſuffer it*; *being defamed, we intreat*; *we are made as the Filth of the World, and the Offſcouring of all Things unto this Day.* And in 2. Cor. vi. 4. *&c.* he gives us yet a farther Account of the Troubles that befel holy Men; he particularly mentions their *Afflictions*, *Neceſſities*, *Diſtreſſes*, *Stripes*, *Impriſonments*, *Labours*, *Watchings.* Theſe were the Allotment of the beſt Men, and the chiefeſt Servants of God, and none could claim Exemption from them. Saint *Peter* told the diſtreſſed Saints he wrote to, that the *ſame Afflictions were accompliſhed in their Brethren that were in the World*, 1. *Pet.* v. 9. The ſame Sufferings that they laboured under happened to all Chriſtians, thoſe that were then at *Rome*, and in other Places. And in the immediately ſucceeding Ages the Croſs was ſtill the very Badge of Chriſtianity, and the Profeſſors of it wore it contentedly, as the holy Patriarchs and Prophets and Apoſtles had done before. *So perſecuted they the Prophets which were before you*, ſaith our Saviour here. If we be good Chriſtians, we muſt be reviled and injured *more Majorum*, as our Forefathers have been; it muſt not ſeem new and ſtrange to us.

AND beſides, our Saviour adjoined theſe Words in the Concluſion of this Beatitude, that he might ſet before us a *Rule* to walk by. The Prophets and holy Men were abuſed and perſecuted; and the holy Scriptures acquaint us how they behaved themſelves in that Condition. *Take then, my Brethren, the Prophets for an Example of Suffering and of Patience*: Set theſe and the Apoſtles and primitive Sainis before you, and obſerve their admirable Behaviour. Having theſe excellent Patterns before you, you may learn how to deport your ſelves in the like Circumſtances. You read, you hear, how they ſtood firm in their Duty, notwithſtanding all the Indignities offered to them? they outbraved all the Falſhoods and Lyes which they were loaded with, and dared to be Good and Holy when it was reputed the blackeſt Crime to be ſo. In this they are our Examples, and we muſt think ourſelves obliged to imitate them.

AND thus I have finiſhed the *particular Conſideration* of every one of the *Eight Beatitudes.* I ſhall now (to render my *Diſcourſes* on this Part of our Saviour's excellent Sermon more complete and entire) offer to you ſome more *General Obſervations* concerning theſe divine Aphoriſms, and then I will put a Period to my Endeavours on this Subject. I will then, now in the Cloſe of all, more fully diſcover to you the Nature of the ſeveral *Graces* which I have treated of, and likewiſe give you a farther Account of the *Rewards* which are adjoined to them: And I ſhall alſo obſerve ſomething from the Order of the Beatitudes, as they are here placed by our Saviour. In brief, I ſhall make ſuch *Reflections* upon the Whole, and the Parts, as will convey true Notices of theſe Things to your Minds, and further you in the Practice of a holy Life.

1*ſt*, WHEREAS 'tis ſaid throughout the ſeveral Beatitudes, that ſuch and ſuch Perſons are *bleſſed*; as for Example, *Bleſſed are the Meek: Bleſſed are the pure in Heart:* You muſt not imagine (as thoſe of the Church of *Rome* do) that Bleſſedneſs is aſcribed to Meekneſs or Purity of Heart, or any other Actions, Virtues or Graces, as to the *meritorious Cauſe*. The Papiſts do more particularly found their Doctrine of *Merit* on thoſe Words in the laſt Beatitude, *Great is your in Heaven*. The *Greek* Word, which we tranſlate *Reward*, is properly *Wages*; and that, ſay they, includes in it *Deſert*, for the Labourer may challenge his Wages, as that which he hath *merited*. But the Anſwer to this is, 1. The *Greek* Word is not always taken in a ſtrict Senſe for *Wages*; but only for a *Recompence* in general. 2. In this Place it cannot be underſtood in the rigorous Senſe, becauſe of the vaſt Difference between the Wages paid to a Workman, and the Reward beſtowed on us by God; for tho' one Man may merit of another, yet no Man can merit of God, becauſe there can be no Work done without him. We are beholding to him for his gracious Aſſiſtance, and on that Account all Merit on our Part is excluded.

BUT 'tis alledged by the Popiſh Writers, that 'tis plain from our Saviour's Words, that we *merit* the Kingdom of Heaven by our good Works and virtuous Actions; becauſe he here all along mentions a certain Grace or Duty, and then annexes a *Reward*, which ſhews the performing that Grace, or Duty, *deſerves that Reward*, as due to it. But they muſt be taught, that this is a very unſound Way of arguing, and that for this Reaſon; becauſe *Reward* and *Merit* are not reciprocal: Tho' a Reward is promiſed to us; yet, it doth not follow, that there is any Merit on our Part: Nay, a *Reward* excludes *Merit*, for the Promiſe of a Reward argues the Goodneſs and Bounty of God, not our Worthineſs. As the Virtues and Graces we exert are mere Gratuities and Gifts of God, (as Scripture every where inculcates) ſo are the Rewards of thoſe Graces freely given us of God. Thus the *Kingdom of Heaven*, *ſeeing of God*, &c. are ours, by God's Bounty only, and not conferr'd upon us, from any Worth in us: No, they are wholly derived to us, from the Mercy and Beneficence of the Donor.

BUT more particularly, to aſſign the *true Nature* of theſe Graces, theſe virtuous and holy Actions mentioned here by our Saviour, (tho' they are not the *meritorious Cauſes* of our Happineſs; yet,) they are, 1. the Seeds of eternal Bleſſedneſs. The Seed is vertually the Flower or Plant; ſo our Habits of Holineſs are ſeminally that which is called Bleſſedneſs. 2. They are Qualifications and Diſpoſitions to a bleſſed State; they fit us for that Happineſs, and make us *meet to be Partakers* of it. 3. They are Conditions and Means of Happineſs; *without theſe no Man ſhall ſee the Lord*; but *with them*, that is, in the Exerciſe of them, we ſhall attain to Bleſſedneſs. 4. They are Signs, Marks, and Evidences of Happineſs. 5. They are in themſelves the Cauſes of Joy and Delectation, which are the very Notion of *Happineſs*: All ſolid and rational Joy is ſeated in Holineſs, and ariſes from thoſe evangelical Graces, begot in us by the holy Spirit; and conſequently theſe are productive of Happineſs.

2dly, I obſerve this, that the Promiſe and Aſſurance of *Future* Happineſs is to be reckoned as our *preſent* Happineſs. *Bleſſed are the pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God. Bleſſed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*, &c. We are ſaid to be bleſſed here, becauſe we ſhall be ſo hereafter. Happineſs, in Reverſion, is the Stock of preſent Felicity. The ſerious Conſideration of the Joys of Heaven begets in us, at preſent, a ſolid and ſubſtantial Rejoicing. Herein is placed the Nature of *Happineſs*, that it *quiets* and *ſatiates* the Mind, and the Senſe of God's Favour and Love, in the ſincere Diſcharge of our Duty, produces this very Effect. It is true, the Felicity, flowing from the Exerciſe of Grace in this Life, differs from the future Happineſs in Degrees and Proportions; but, notwithſtanding this, it is truly Beatifick.

3dly, WE may take Notice, that all along in theſe Beatitudes, Grace and Glory, Duty and Reward, Work and Wages, go together. To *Poverty of Spirit*, and *Purity of Heart*, are annexed the *Kingdom of Heaven*, and *ſeeing of God*: And the like may be obſerved in the reſt. Firſt Chriſt tells us what we muſt do, and then he acquaints us with our Reward. Here is the Beatitude *of the Way*; (as the School-men call it) that is, ſpiritual Grace; and here is the Beatitude *of our Country*, i. e. Life everlaſting. We are to obſerve our Saviour's Method; we muſt be careful that we do not ſeparate theſe two; we muſt not flatter ourſelves in thinking that we ſhall be happy, tho' we neglect to make Holineſs our Concern.

4thly, I MIGHT obſerve, that Chriſtianity is no hard Service, no uneaſy Yoke, for *Bleſſedneſs*, manifold Bleſſedneſs, attends it. Here is, we ſee, a large Stock of Beatitudes, and no Model of Religion in the World is ſo rich, ſo ſatisfactory as this. Chriſt came on purpoſe to make us happy; and accordingly, the firſt Thing he treats of in his *Sermons* in this: The very Exerciſe of the Graces, which Chriſtianity requires of us, in our Happineſs. Holineſs is not only the Inſtrument, but the very Ingredient of our Bleſſedneſs. *Vitam quæ faciunt Beatiorem,—hæc ſunt.* Theſe Graces here mentioned by our Saviour, *Poverty of Spirit*, *Meekneſs*, *Purity of Heart*, &c. are the Things which always carry real Happineſs along with them.

5thly, TAKE Notice how theſe Beatitudes, eſpecially, the firſt and laſt, that is, *Spiritual Poverty* and *Perſecution*, are exactly fitted to the Condition of thoſe Perſons Chriſt ſpoke to; namely, to his Diſciples, his conſtant Auditors and Followers. His Sermon is calculated on purpoſe for them, and for that Condition and State of Life which they were liable to. He prepoſſeſſes them with this, that if they will be his real Diſciples, they muſt be humble and poor in Spirit, and they muſt prepare for Sorrows and Perſecutions. And herein (as was obſerved in the Beginning) he corrects that Error, which, it may be, they had, even *at that Time* imbib'd; but 'tis certain, that they drank too deeply of it *afterwards*; that Chriſt's Kingdom was to be of this World; that it ſhould be external and pompous; and that the Followers of the Meſſias ſhould not be moleſted with Afflictions and Perſecutions. In theſe Beatitudes, therefore, Chriſt draws them off from ſuch groſs Conceptions and carnal Thoughts of the Meſſias, and acquaints them that the firſt Principles and Grounds of the Chriſtian Profeſſion are Self-denial, and taking up the Croſs.

6thly, FOR the better underſtanding our Duty, and that we may not miſtake the Doctrine of the Beatitudes, we muſt remember that theſe Graces here mentioned are to be taken *jointly*. When Bleſſedneſs is entail'd on one ſingle Grace, it is to be underſtood in Conjunction with all the reſt. *Poverty of Spirit*, though it be an excellent Virtue, yet alone it will not bring us to Happineſs; and ſo you may conclude of *Meekneſs*, of *ſpiritual Mourning*, and the reſt. Theſe Graces have Bleſſedneſs promiſed to them, but not as they are ſingle, and ſtand ſeparated from others. One Grace carries not Happineſs with it, as it is divided from all the reſt. Goodneſs is an aggregate and complex Thing. If you exclude but one Grace, you marr all.

7thly, THEREFORE we may obſerve, that theſe Graces have a plain Connection and Dependence one on another. It is an uſual Maxim with the Moraliſts, Virtues hang together in a Chain: One Link draws on another; break but one, and the whole Chain is ſhatter'd. Thus it is in the Chriſtian Graces, and accordingly I will briefly ſhew how theſe Graces *help* and *further one another*. To begin with the firſt, who ſees not that that, namely, *Poverty of Spirit*, makes Way for ſpiritual *Mourning?* For when we are once poor and mean in our own Opinions, and are truly ſenſible of our vicious Nature and Practices, then, and not before, we ſhall thoroughly lament them and mourn for them. And having thus duly mourn'd for our Sins, we ſhall be ready for the next Grace, which is *Meekneſs*; for having been ſenſible how vile and ſinful we are ourſelves, we ſhall not be harſh and ſevere unto others, though they be great Offenders: We ſhall learn to be meek and mild, to be of ſupple and gentle Spirits. And then this Meekneſs can't but promote the following Graces, for the meek Soul (of all others) will moſt ardently *hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs*, will impatiently long for Pardon of Sin, and the Divine Favour and Acceptance; which having obtain'd, he will learn to be *merciful* to others, which is the next Duty commanded by our Saviour; he will eaſily paſs by Wrongs and Injuries, he will tender the Good and Welfare of his Brethren as his own, eſpecially when they are in Need and Diſtreſs, he will think himſelf obliged to ſuccour and relieve them. Well, but all theſe Actions of Mercy and Charity muſt proceed from ſincere and upright Intentions, or elſe they are worthleſs and inſignificant, wherefore the next Thing that is enjoin'd is *Purity of Heart*. But then, leſt ſome ſhould boaſt of their inward Purity, and not think themſelves engaged to an outward ſeemly Behaviour before Men, leſt they ſhould delight in Quarrels and Contentions with their Brethren, our Saviour immediately adjoins the Duty of *Peace-making*. He obſerves the Order which St. *James* ſpeaks of, *The Wiſdom* (ſaith he) *that* *is from above is firſt pure, and then peaceable,* Chap. iii. v. 17. and accordingly he tells us, that the *Pure in Heart are bleſſed,* and then adjoins, *Bleſſed are the Peace-makers.* The Connection between *Purity* and *Peace* is very viſible, and the one doth hugely advance and befriend the other.

BUT now, at laſt, I may ſeem to be at a Stand, for what *Connection* can there be imagined between *Peace-making* and *Perſecution ?* Theſe two are inconſiſtent, for if the Chriſtian Peace-makers would diſcharge their Office aright, if they would make timely Uſe of their Weapon-ſalve, ſurely there would be but little Perſecution in the World, and as little Reviling and Evil-ſpeaking. But then you muſt remember what I ſaid concerning the Chriſtian Peace-maker, that though one would think no Man ſhould or could fall out with him, he being made up of ſo much Love and Sweetneſs, yet the Experience of Things tells us, that the evangelical Peace-maker doth often meet with the hardeſt Uſage. He is beaten, becauſe he endeavours to part others; he is hated and perſecuted, becauſe he labours to hinder Men from hating and perſecuting one another. This vexes the wicked World, for they get moſt of all by Diviſions, and never loſe more than when good Men endeavour Peace and Agreement. And thus you ſee there is a *Dependence* and *Connection* between the Graces mentioned in theſe Beatitudes.

HOWEVER, as to the *Order* of theſe Beatitudes, it is ſufficient to ſay (as a learned Perſon hath obſerved upon them) that this about *Perſecution* is the laſt of all, becauſe it is the Means of conſummating and perfecting a Chriſtian. And therefore in *Clemens*'s Time, inſtead of reading this Beatitude as we do [*theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*] it was read thus by ſome [*they ſhall be perfect*]. A Chriſtian, like his Maſter, is made perfect by Suffering. *Job* was a juſt and holy Man, and nothing ſeemed to be wanting to his Perfection, but undergoing Affliction; and accordingly he was brought upon the Stage, and he encounter'd all Kinds of Evils and Calamities, and thereby his Virtues and Graces were compleated. This Beatitude then is the Conſummation of all the others, and therefore 'tis not without Reaſon that it is twice mentioned, as you may obſerve.

Eighthly, ANOTHER Obſervation which I offer is the *Likeneſs* and almoſt *Identity* of ſome of the Beatitudes. As I ſhew'd before how they help and further one another, ſo I might inſtance in ſome of them, and ſhew how one contains in it ſomething of another, and may be ſaid to be a Part of it. *Poverty of Spirit* and *Chriſtian Mourning,* in many Caſes, are co-incident, ſo is *ſpiritual Poverty* and *Meekneſs*; and *hungring* and *thirſting after Rigeteouſneſs* partakes of all three, as would eaſily appear, if I ſhould rehearſe what I delivered of the Nature and Effects of thoſe Graces. They run into one another, and you cannot fully comprehend the full Extent of the one, without conſidering the other. And it were no hard Task to make good the very ſame of many Chriſtian Duties and Graces, which are nearly allied to one another.

Ninthly, I PASS to another Reflection, which I make upon our Saviour's *beginning* his Beatitudes with *Poverty of Spirit.* This is the firſt Thing in Chriſt's Sermon, as if he would thereby intimate to us, that this is the Foundation of all the other Beatitudes that follow, as moſt certainly it is. Spiritual Poverty is the firſt Step to Happineſs: As by the contrary, Pride, the Devil was thrown down from Heaven, and *Adam* loſt his Innocence and primitive Happineſs. This was the firſt Riſe of all the Miſery of the apoſtate Angels, and of lapſed Man. Pride of Spirit ruin'd Mankind. It is no Wonder then that Poverty of Spirit is placed in the Front of all the Beatitudes, and hath Bleſſedneſs annex'd to it: This is the Root and Baſis of all Chriſtian Endowments; this capacitates us for the Reception of Grace, and facilitates all our holy Enterprizes and Endeavours. All the other Beatitudes hang upon this one, proceed from it, and are ingrafted in it. There was good Reaſon then for Chriſt's making this the firſt of all his Beatitudes: And the laſt is like unto it, *viz.* a Reſolution to ſuffer Perſecution. And by the By I might obſerve, that the *Reward* annex'd to *Perſecution* is the very ſame with that which is promis'd to *Poverty of Spirit, Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven:* The Way to Heaven and true Happineſs is ſpiritual Poverty.

Tenthly and *Laſtly,* You may ſee and obſerve, from reading theſe ſeveral Beatitudes, the great Difference between the *World*'s Judgment of Happineſs, and that of our *Saviour.* Moſt Men are ſtartled at ſuch ſtrange Doctrine as this, *Bleſſed are the Perſecuted* and the *Reviled, bleſſed* are they that *mourn,* and are *poor in Spirit.* There is little Comfort, ſay they, in ſuch Bleſſedneſs. The Generality of Men place their Happineſs in ſomething which may gratify the ſenſitive Appetite; they pronounce thoſe bleſſed who are rich and wealthy, who are reſpected and honour'd in the World, who are great and powerful, who are witty and politic, who are fair and beautiful, who feed high and fare deliciouſly: Theſe are *Beatitudes* in the World's Ethics. But you ſee how our Saviour's differ from theſe; and though they ſeem ſtrong Paradoxes and Riddles to the vulgar Herd of Mortals, who always miſtook true Happineſs, and ſtyle them miſerable who are nothing ſo, yet we are aſſur'd by him who is Truth itſelf, that *they* are the Things on which both our preſent and future Happineſs depend. Thus we are inform'd by the great Author of all Happineſs; and thus innumerable Perſons have really and experimentally found it, and therefore we have all the Reaſon in the World to believe it to be true. Though the greateſt Numbers of Men entertain falſe Apprehenſions, and live in a Miſtake all their Lives long; yet our Saviour came to ſhame them (if it were poſſible) into a better and ſounder Judgment of Things: He bids them reviſe their Notions, change their odd Conceptions, correct their groſs Miſtakes, and, for the future, meaſure Happineſs by ſomething which is internal and ſpiritual, pure and refined.

To conclude, having thus made my Remarks on this Part of our Saviour's excellent Sermon on the Mount, it remains now that, *firſt*, we highly prize this divine and heavenly Doctrine; *Secondly*, that we reduce it to Practice.

I. How highly ſhould we value this excellent and tranſcendent Doctrine of our Lord? It was the Confeſſion of his Adverſaries that *no Man ſpake like him*: And it was the Acknowledgment of his Diſciples, *Thou haſt the Words of eternal Life.* Both which Teſtimonies ſhould prevail upon us to attend unto the Dictates of ſo knowing an Inſtructer, ſo pathetic an Orator, ſo ſolid and convincing a *Preacher*, and who deſerv'd that Title better than ever *Solomon* did. Let us then lay aſide all Prejudices, and greedily embrace theſe excellent Verities which he deliver'd with ſuch Majeſty and Authority. To diſpute here is to blaſpheme. We cannot be too credulous where the Propoſitions of Truth itſelf are tender'd to us. Let us then yield a full Aſſent to the Decrees of our heavenly Maſter; let us cordially adhere to his holy Doctrine, which, if we follow its Conduct, will aſſuredly lead us to true and laſting Felicity.

2. Let us amend our Lives by it. It is reported of Dr. *Linner*, that when he had ſeriouſly read over theſe *Beatitudes*, with the reſt of our Saviour's *Sermon*, he thus cried out, Either theſe are not Chriſtians Words or we are not true Chriſtians; ſo great a Diſagreement and Diſproportion did he find between Chriſtians Doctrine and the Lives of Men. I wiſh there were not Occaſion for the ſame Complaint ſtill, yea, much more than before. He that looks into the Manners of Men, at this Day, will find abundant Reaſon to repeat his Words; but let the Conſideration of it ſhame us into better Practices; let the Diſcrepancy of other Mens Lives to ſo good a Rule make *us* the more zealous of being conformable thereunto; let us be effectually perſuaded to copy out Chriſt's Doctrine into our Manners, and to expreſs the Efficacy of his holy Principles in our Lives; let our Behaviour be worthy of the Name of Chriſtians, and the Excellency of ſo honourable a Profeſſion: In a Word, let our Lives and Actions acquaint all thoſe we converſe with, that *we* are the *Poor in Spirit* (with whom our Saviour begins his Sermon) that we are thoſe that *mourn* for our own and other Mens Sins, that we are the *Merciful*, and the *Pure in Heart*, that we are the true *Peace-makers*; and laſtly, when we are reviled and perſecuted for doing well (which can ſcarcely happen otherwiſe, in ſo degenerate an Age as we live in) let us make it appear, that we *ſuffer for Righteouſneſs Sake* by the Gladneſs and Joyfulneſs of our Spirits, and by our entire reſigning ourſelves to the Good Will and Pleaſure of God, who will reward our ſincere Performances here with eternal Glory hereafter.

A DISCOURSE OF Chriſtian Circumſpection or Exactneſs.

EPHES. V. 15, 16.

See then that ye walk circumſpectly, not as Fools, but as Wiſe; redeeming the Time, becauſe the Days are evil.

It is no uncommon thing to hear Perſons commended for their regular and circumſpect Way of Living, *viz.* with reſpect to their Diet and Exerciſe, and other Things that belong to their bodily Health; whilſt few are taken Notice of, eſteem'd and honour'd for an higher ſort of Regularity and Circumſpection, ſuch as relates to their immortal Souls, and the Concerns of a better Life. Here many are content to be remiſs and ſuperficial, and make it the leaſt of their Study to be exact. It may be the *name* of the moſt High is ſometimes in their Mouths, but this is no Argument that *he* hath any Place in their Hearts and Lives. The Devil was the firſt that we read of, that named the Name of *God*, as appears in *Gen.* iii. 1. when he ſaid to *Eve*, *Hath God ſaid, ye ſhall not eat of every Tree of the Garden?* The beſt Words may be pronounc'd, the beſt Things may be mention'd by thoſe that are worſt, and therefore we may gather thence, that Religion conſiſts not in bare Words and Profeſſions. Some Trees that bear the faireſt Bloſſoms, and double Flowers, bear no Fruit at all. So it is in the Lives of Men, the moſt ſpecious and florid Profeſſions are often void of Practice. But this is only where *true Chriſtianity* doth not prevail: For that of *Juſtin*, the Chriſtian Philoſopher and Martyr, is an unqueſtionable Truth, that * *if any live otherwiſe than Chriſt taught, it is a certain Sign that they are not Chriſtians, although with their Tongues they acknowledge the Chriſtian Doctrine.* And this is what the Apoſtle here declares, that a circumſpect, wiſe, and holy Walking is requir'd of all thoſe that take upon them the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity.

In which Words are obſervable theſe three Parts, *Firſt*, An important and indiſpenſible Duty incumbent on us, *walking circumſpectly*. *Secondly*, The particular Inſtances of this Circumſpection, which are, 1. Chriſtian Wiſdom, *not as Fools but as Wiſe*. A prudential and wiſe Carriage becomes a Chriſtian. 2. *Redeeming the Time*. He that ſpends his Hours idly and vainly, cannot pretend to Circumſpection. *Thirdly* and *Laſtly*, Here is added the Reaſon why we ought to walk circumſpectly and be wiſe, and redeem the Time *becauſe the Days are evil,* that

* Οἳ δ' ἂν μὴ εὑρίσκονται βιοῦντες ὡς ἐδίδαξε, γνωριζέσθωσαν μὴ ὄντες χριστιανοὶ, κἂν λέγωσι διὰ γλώττης τὰ τοῦ χριστοῦ διδάγματα. Apol. 2. pro Chriſtianis.

that is, either wicked and corrupted by the Manners of Men, or elſe troubleſome and calamitous, which is the Reſult of the former. You are placed, ſaith the Apoſtle, in the midſt of Snares and Temptations, you converſe with thoſe who bear a Hatred not only to you, but to all Godlineſs and Honeſty; you are fallen into the laſt Days, *fæcunda culpæ ſecula*, abounding with all manner of Vice; it is your Lot to live in wicked, and conſequently in perilous Times: Wherefore you are concern'd to look narrowly to yourſelves, to be very careful how you behave yourſelves, to be extraordinarily wary in your Lives and Converſations. *See that ye walk circumſpectly, not*, &c.

I BEGIN with the firſt Obſervable, the general important Duty incumbent on us, *See that ye walk circumſpectly.* The Word ἀκριβῶς here tranſlated *circumſpectly*, may more properly be render'd *exactly* or *ſtrictly*, as the beſt Criticks have determin'd. And ſo the *Greek* Word is tranſlated in *Acts* xxvi. 5. * the *moſt ſtrait, or the ſtricteſt Sect.* Accordingly this Word denotes unto us that Accuracy and Strictneſs of Life which Is requir'd of every one that ſtiles himſelf a Chriſtian, and adheres to the Doctrine and Principles of ſo excellent a Religion. Yet our Tranſlation is not to be condemn'd, becauſe *Circumſpection* or *Caution* is a neceſſary Ingredient of the Chriſtian and Evangelical Accuracy, and therefore this accurate Walking is not unfitly render'd by our Tranſlators *walking circumſpectly.*

THE Remark then upon this firſt Clauſe of the Text is this, that a Chriſtian's Life is a Life of the greateſt Accuracy and Exactneſs. A Chriſtian is one that is not like other Men, he ſurpaſſes the common Condition of Mankind. He is one that hath a holy Ambition to be eminent, and to make a more than ordinary Figure in the World. He knows himſelf born for great Things, and therefore can't be confin'd by the common Line, nor tied down to the uſual Dimenſions. He is too high for the low Roofs which others live under. He contents not himſelf with what is mean, but aſpires to Eminency, and does Things that are excellent and heroical. He ſtrives to be one of a Thouſand, his Converſation and Carriage are peculiarly ſtrict, and apparently different from the reſt of the World.

THAT you may not miſtake me, and that I may give you a juſt and complete Character of this Perſon, I will ſhew you *Firſt* (by way of Remotion) what this exact and circumſpect Walking *is not*; *Secondly*, (more poſitively) I will acquaint you what *it is*.

Firſt THEN, *Negatively*, this exact and circumſpect Walking is not *Singularity* and *Affectation*. It is no fantaſtick Oppoſition to the common Uſages and receiv'd Cuſtoms of Mankind, if they be in themſelves lawful and innocent. And therefore I cannot believe that the poor deluded Man, who cries *thou* inſtead of *you*, and prides himſelf in upſtart Words and Phraſes, and renounceth all the Tokens of Civility and outward Reverence to Men, hath any Connivance from Chriſtianity to do ſo: For this (I mean Chriſtianity) being a manly and generous Inſtitution, permits not any ſort of Men to be humourſome and capricious, it ſuffers them not to walk Antipodes to other Folks, to live in a continued Contradiction to the Manners of the ſobereſt part of the World. Indeed it chargeth us that we *be not conform'd to this World*, i. e. to the Vices and evil Faſhions of it. To comply with theſe is utterly ſinful and unlawful. But it puts no Reſtraint upon our Behaviour when it is laudable and of good Report. It checks not our harmleſs and innocent Deportment, it bids us not abandon our civil Carriage, and ſhew ourſelves diſreſpectful to one another, eſpecially to ſuch as are our Betters or Superiours. I know ſome in the primitive Times of Chriſtianity ſeem'd to be very ſingular, they refuſed to frequent the common Spectacles and Shews, they would not † anoint themſelves, and wear Garlands: Nor would they crown their Dead with Flowers, (as he that takes the *Chriſtian*'s Part in *Minutius Felix* relates) tho' theſe were the uſual Practices of thoſe Times. But then it is to be remember'd that they ſhew'd themſelves averſe to theſe and ſome other Things, becauſe they were unwilling to do as the *Pagans* did; they were loth to comply with Cuſtoms that were *idolatrous*, or that were mixed with Prophaneſs: And ſuch were thoſe before-mentioned. This is not the Caſe of the Men I ſpeak of, and therefore their Singularity is a mere imaginary Accurateneſs, founded on their own Fancies. It is, as *Maximus Tyrius* ſaith of *Plato*'s Commonwealth, or his

* ἀκριβεϛάτη αἵρεσις.

† *Tertull. de Coron. Milit.*

Idea of a City, * rather a Shew of Accuracy in the bare Notion, than any Reality and Uſefulneſs in the Thing it ſelf. This is a moſt certain Truth, that the Goſpel-Inſtitution is not peeviſh and froward, ſowre and cynical, it is no Friend to affected Sullenneſs and Moroſity.

Secondly, THIS Exactneſs in my Text ſavours nothing of *over-nice Fear* and *Superſtition*, in which many place a great part of their Religion. If it were any thing of this Nature, the *jewiſh* Devotioniſts had not been ſo often and ſo ſeverely chid by our Saviour. We frequently find him chaſtiſing their fond and ſuperſtitious Rites, tho' they expected by the Obſervance of them to be reckon'd as very exact, and to be eſteem'd the only Bigots of that Age. St. *Paul* tells us, he was of the *ſtricteſt Sect* of Religion, meaning that of the *Phariſees*: But that Strictneſs and Exactneſs were afterwards undervalued by him as trifling and childiſh. He deſpis'd and condemn'd this accurate Way of living, becauſe it had not any real Goodneſs and Sanctity adhering to it, becauſe it contain'd nothing in it of ſolid Accompliſhment and Excellency: Nay, (which was the higheſt Diſparagement of it) it ſerv'd them only to cover and diſguiſe the fouleſt Luſts and Miſcarriages. They would by no Means eat with unwaſhen Hands: But they could be content to defile their Hands with Blood, even the Blood of the ſpotleſs Lamb of God. They would not eat nor drink, unleſs it were in ſuch a peculiar Mode, but they could without any Ceremony devour Widows Houſes, and be guilty of Rapine and Violence, and the groſſeſt Immoralities. This plainly ſhews that their pretended Exactneſs had nothing of Worth in it.

Thirdly, NEITHER doth this Duty imply any *Phariſaical Boaſting* and *Oſtentation* of Strictneſs. That proud and arrogant Sect before-mention'd uſed to glory in their great Severity of Life, or rather in the mere Appearance of it. They with great Inſolence deſpis'd thoſe whoſe Fringes and Phylacteries were not ſo broad, and whoſe Prayers were not ſo long as theirs. Theſe were the Men that ſounded a *Trumpet* when they gave Alms, to invite the good People to come and ſee the fond *Shew* of their Charity, the mere Pageantry of their Religion. Their Prayers were expos'd to the vulgar Liking and Approbation, and the Corners of Streets were their Chapels. They did all (as our Saviour upbraided them) † *to be ſeen of Men*; they appear'd as on a *Theater*, they trod the Stage and acted a Part in Religion: And therefore no Wonder that theſe Actors (as the Uſage is) look'd for the kind *Applauſe* of the Spectators. But this hiſtrionical Religion is the higheſt Mockery and Blaſphemy againſt the Divine Majeſty that can poſſibly be imagined, and therefore nothing can be more hateful and deteſtable to him. This *Phariſaiſm*, though it hath an Appearance of Strictneſs and extraordinary Sanctity, yet really it contains nothing worthy and excellent in it, but is indeed the greateſt Diſgrace to Religion.

Fourthly, THIS exact Living doth not import any *fond Rigour* and *Auſterity over the Body*, as ſome have imagin'd. It is true, there ought to be a juſt Diſcipline over this part, and St. *Paul* himſelf made uſe of it: But the Rules of Chriſtianity will not abet the Exceſs and Extravagancy of ſome Mens Practice in this Particular, and therefore here I might juſtly *laſh* ſome Perſons for doing ſo to themſelves. They ſeem to me to wrong Nature whilſt they pretend to worſhip the God of Nature. Why ſhould not their Charity begin at home, and be exercis'd firſt upon themſelves? Who can without Indignation and Pity mention the Fraternities among the *Mahometans*, the Brotherhoods in the *Indies*, the Frieries at *Rome*, and in other Popiſh Countries? Where battering and bruiſing their Fleſh are thought to be doing God good Service, where the Severities and Tortures of *Perſecution* which they exerciſe on *Hereticks* (when they can light on them) do hardly exceed thoſe which they impoſe upon themſelves? This is a Smack of the old Idolatry of *Baal*'s Prieſts, (1 *Kings* xviii. 28.) who out of a cruel and inhuman kind of Zeal cut and ſlaſh'd themſelves. The Worſhippers of *Iſis* did ſo, as an || antient Hiſtorian acquaints us. Whipping was an old piece of *Pagan* Religion, as may be gather'd from *Plutarch*, who tells us that among the *Lacedemonians* ſome of the young Men of the Nobility (in the Sight of their Friends) uſed to laſh one another very tightly before the Altar. And ſome ** later Writers will ſatisfy us how other *Heathens* were wont to diſcipline themſelves in this kind. But I will ſpare theſe deluded Souls the rather becauſe they are ſo harſh to themſelves.

Ff 2 ONLY

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* Κατὰ τὸ ἀκριβέϛατον μᾶλλον ἢ χρειωδέϛατον.

† Πρὸς θεαθῆναι.

|| *Herodotus in Euterpe.*

** *Menoch. de Rep. Hebr. l.* 4. *Voſſ. in Maimonid. c.* 12.

ONLY let me leave this with thoſe of the Church of *Rome*, who imitate them, that nothing which is over-rigid and ſevere, hath or can have the Stamp of Virtue and Chriſtianity upon it. For theſe are Eaſy and Pleaſant, and are attended with Delight and Chearfulneſs. The evangelical Inſtitution guilds the Faces of its Profeſſors with Smiles, but doth not diſfigure them with needleſs Cryings and Groanings. It bids us keep *under our Bodies and bring them into Subjection*, but it doth not authorize us to make Slaves of them, and to exerciſe them with mercileſs and bloody Stripes. In brief, too great Strictneſs is an extreme to be avoided in Chriſtianity. A ſevere and rigid Service cannot be a *reaſonable* one, and ſuch the *Chriſtian* is.

Fifthly, THIS ſtrictneſs or exactneſs of Life doth not contain in it any Notion of *Merit* and *Supererrogation*. Though we climb up to the greateſt Heights of Chriſtianity, and take in the whole Circumference of our Duties, and the exact Circle of Religion whilſt we do ἀκριβῶς περιπατεῖν, *walk about Circumſpectly*, yet we can arrogate nothing to ourſelves. We have done but what was our Duty to do, and inſtead of thinking to Merit, we are taught by our infallible Inſtructor to ſay, *We are unprofitable Servants*.

Laſtly, THIS circumſpect and exact Walking doth not ſpeak *complete Perfection and abſolute Freedom from all Sin*. The remains of Vice will adhere to our Natures, and lodge in them until our Souls and Bodies be divorc'd and take their ſolemn leave of one another. Upon their return and re-union they ſhall become ſinleſs, but this is the Accompliſhment of Heaven only. And thus I have briefly ſhewed you wherein this circumſpect and ſtrict Walking doth *not conſiſt*; and you may, by what I have ſaid, correct in part the falſe Notions that are abroad in the World, and learn to apprehend aright concerning the Life of a Chriſtian. [*Pauſe*.]

TO further and advance you ſtill in this great and weighty Affair, I will proceed in the next Place to tell you *poſitively* wherein this Exactneſs or Circumſpection, which the Apoſtle commends to you, *doth conſiſt*. *Firſt*, It is oppos'd to *Idleneſs*, *Neutrality*, and *Indifferency*, and conſequently is an Act of *Chriſtian Zeal* and *Vigour*. The Word ἀκριβῶς ſignifies the utmoſt Care and Caution, Study and Diligence. And this is that which you find ſo often urged upon you as your Duty in the holy Volume. *Thou haſt commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently*, Pſal. cxix. 4. which is fully explained in *Deut.* vi. 5. *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy might.* All the Faculties both of Mind and Body are to be exerted, every Principle is to be put into Action, all the Powers muſt be ſet on work, and that with the greateſt Warmth and Vigour imaginable. And as this was the Law and Conſtitution of the Old Teſtament, ſo it is no leſs of the New. Accordingly our Saviour bids us * *ſtrive to enter in at the ſtreight gate*; and the Apoſtle's Advice is, that *we be not ſlothful in buſineſs, but fervent in ſpirit*. The Chriſtian's Life is a Life of great and unſpeakable Induſtry. He muſt ſhake off all Coldneſs and Indifferency, and proſecute Religion with the warmeſt Emotions of Mind, with the moſt ardent Zeal and Livelineſs.

* *Rom.* xii. 11.

Secondly, THIS ſtrict and accurate Walking is oppos'd to *Partiality*, and ſo doth denote *univerſal Obedience*, and having reſpect unto all the divine Law. There is no *Exactneſs* without a *Rule* or *Square*, and that is the Word of God, the divine Commandments, which (as the holy *Pſalmiſt* tells us) are *exceeding broad*. We cannot be ſaid to walk by Rule, unleſs we adjuſt our Actions to this Latitude. The Word ἀκριβῶς, according to Etymologiſts, ſignifies to go to the *Top* and *Extremity* of a Thing. And ſo we are hereby taught to be willing to go to the utmoſt of every Precept and Law of Heaven. He that would ſignally approve himſelf a real Follower and true Votary of Chriſt, muſt march to the furtheſt Confines and Lines of Virtue: He muſt not boggle at any Injunction: He muſt chearfully diſcharge his whole Duty, whether it be toward God, or his Neighbours, or himſelf. *I hate every falſe way*, ſaid the holy *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. cxix. 104. And the ſame ſhould be our ſincere Profeſſion and Reſolution.

NOW this univerſal Reſpect unto God's Laws (wherein the chriſtian *Circumſpection* is ſo much ſeen) requires of us and ſtrictly obliges us to theſe three Things;

1. THAT we refrain not only from outward and viſible Acts of Sin, but that the inward Luſts and hidden Deſires of Vice be carefully Suppreſt in our Minds. Many have a Perſwaſion that if they be not externally and apparently Vitious, it is enough: They flatter themſelves that they may lawfully retain in their Breaſts an inward Affection to thoſe Sins which they do not publickly act. But this is a great Miſtake, and a groſs Fault: And the Reaſon is plain; for if we have ſecret regards for our Sins, and willingly reſerve in our Minds and Memories the repreſentation of them, it is to be concluded that Sin hath ſtill the Maſtery over us, and that it would actually and openly exert itſelf, if favourable Opportunities were afforded us. We are concerned therefore to rifle our Conſciences and ſearch into the inmoſt Receſſes of our Hearts, and baniſh thence all unſeen and ſecret Affection to Sin, otherwiſe we muſt never pretend to be exact Walkers.

Again, *Secondly*, WE are obliged, as we would be impartial Obſervers of God's Laws, not only to perform the viſible and publick Offices of Religion, and ſuch as are more eaſy in themſelves and more creditable and faſhionable in the Account of the World, but likewiſe to be mindful of the private Exerciſes of Devotion, ſuch as are Praying to God in our Retirements, Reading and Meditating on the Scriptures in our Privacies, Examining ourſelves, Reflecting on our Lives and Behaviour in the World, and other the like holy Duties, which are the proper Employment of our Chambers and Cloſets. Here it is that Men are miſtaken likewiſe: They think that if they come to Church, and join with the Prayers and Praiſes of the Congregation, they are ſufficiently Religious: Whereas they ſhould be convinced of this, that there is a great deal of Religion and Devotion to be exerciſed at Home. He that heartily loves God, and hath a true Senſe of Goodneſs, will be pious and devout when he is Alone, and when no Eye ſeeth him. He is not ſollicitous that *Men* ſhould hear his Prayers, but *God*, who alone knows his Heart, and can return a gracious Anſwer to his Petitions.

Thirdly, OUR univerſal Reſpect to God's Laws obliges us not only to abſtain from groſs and notorious Crimes, and ſuch Offences as are very heinous and enormous, but alſo to make conſcience of leſſer and ſmaller Sins. He that lives exactly will not wilfully fail in the * *leaſt Matters*, but is obſervant of the *moſt minute* Things in Religion. Idle Words and vain Thoughts are to be corrected and controll'd by an exact Lover of Goodneſs. Even ſome of the *Pagan* Moraliſts ſpeak bravely of the Government of theſe latter, *viz.* the Thoughts. † *A good Man will not venture not only to do, but to think any Thing which he hath not the confidence to impart to the World.* And ſo *Seneca*, in Words to the ſame Purpoſe, *A good Man will not dare to Think what he dares not Divulge*, i. e. *he will not imagine that Sin, which he abhors to practiſe.* Much more this may be ſaid of a *Chriſtian*: For he knows that the leaſt Commandments concern him as well as the greateſt: therefore he will *abſtain from all appearance of Evil*, according to the Apoſtle's Advice; he will cautiouſly avoid the Occaſions of Sin and Vanity, he will ſuppreſs the firſt Bublings forth of Luſt. Thus I have ſhewed wherein our *univerſal Obedience to God's Commands* (which is Part of the chriſtian *Accuracy*) doth conſiſt.

Thirdly, THIS chriſtian Duty of exact Walking is oppos'd to our *giving of Scandal and Offence* to our Brethren, and conſequently commends to us a *wary and cautious Deporting of ourſelves* before thoſe we converſe with. This is *Circumſpection* in the true and preciſe Notion of the Word. It ſuppoſes Perſons to look about them, and to take good Notice of Things, and weigh well what they do, and before whom they act. And thus I find ἀκριβῶς rendered *Cautè* by the vulgar *Latin*. Every good Man will ballaſt his Soul with Prudence and Diſcretion, and ſo carefully ſteer his chriſtian Courſe, that he may not only be ſafe himſelf, but that others may not be endanger'd and even ſhipwreck'd by his unwary and offenſive Actions. This certainly is worthy of the ſerious Thoughts of every Chriſtian; he is concerned to act Cautiouſly, to have regard to the Quality and Condition of the Perſons he converſes with, and who obſerve his Behaviour. He muſt not willingly and deſignedly give Offence to his weak and ſcrupulous Neighbours by the undue Exerciſe and Uſe of his chriſtian

* Ἀκριβῶς, παρὰ τὸ ἄχρι καὶ τὸ βαιον. Ut alij.

† *Vir bonus nòn modò facere, ſed ne cogitare quidem quicquam audebit, quod nòn audeat prædicare.* Tull. Off. lib. 3.

chriſtian Liberty. He muſt conſider in what Circumſtances he is, and of what Temper the Perſons are whom he hath to do with. If he would effectually promote the good of others, he muſt ſtudy the beſt and moſt prudent Ways of Dealing with them, leſt by Unadviſedneſs and Raſhneſs he not only make *himſelf* guilty, but involve his *Brethren* alſo in the Offence. But of this I ſhall have Occaſion to ſpeak more largely when I come to treat of the ſecond Clauſe of the Words.

Fourthly, THIS Duty in my Text is oppos'd to *Hypocriſy* and *Formality*, and ſo it engages us to be *Sincere* and *Cordial* in what ever we do. *Beza* therefore renders the Word ἀκριβῶς by *Penitùs*, and he adds this Account of it, that *penitùs*, among the *Latins*, is the ſame with *intrinſecùs*, or *ad intima uſque*, for which he quotes the Poet,

——— *Et penitùs cauſas tentare latentes.*

An undeniable evidence of chriſtian Exactneſs is our being acquainted with the Inwards and Vitals of Religion. He that reſts in mere Outſides and Shews, and like the ſuperficial *Phariſee*, *makes clean the Outſide of the Cup and of the Platter*, and gives himſelf no Trouble about what is *within*, is no Man of Exactneſs. The Papiſts are juſtly blamed for maintaining their *Opus operatum*, the *bare doing* of religious Duties, and not requiring that the Heart and Mind go along with them. Let me tell you, we have a great deal of this Popery among Proteſtants, and among ourſelves in particular. We content ourſelves with the naked Performance of Praying, Hearing, receiving the Sacrament, but we do not ſufficiently concern ourſelves for the mental and ſpiritual Part of theſe holy Exerciſes; and therein we diſcover our *Inſincerity* and *Hypocriſy*. But do we conſider what a *Hypocrite* is? He is a Cheat and Counterfeit, he is nothing of what he ſeems to be, he is (according to Chriſt's excellent Similitude) a *whited Sepulchre*, which appears beautiful on the Outſide, but is within full of dead Mens Bones, and of all Uncleanneſs. Our Saviour, in perfect Abhorrence of this vile Hypocriſy, is often opening theſe Sepulchres and expoſing them to View, and diſcovering their Filth and Rottenneſs. He aſſures his Followers, that *except their Righteouſneſs exceed the Righteouſneſs of theſe* Hypocrites and Pretenders, *they can in no wiſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, Mat. v. 20. He that is *Superficial* cannot be *Exact*.

Fifthly, HE that would acquit himſelf to be an exact Walker, muſt more mind the Things that are *Subſtantial* and *Eſſential* in Religion, than thoſe that are merely *Circumſtantial* and *Accidental*. Religion doth not conſiſt *in Puncto*, its exactneſs is not placed in petty and mean Things. No, this was the Strictneſs of the Perſons I juſt now ſpoke of; but it ill becomes a true Chriſtian. To *tythe mint and cummin* might ſatisfy the Conſcience of a *Phariſee*, but nothing is more welcome and pleaſing to the upright Soul, than *the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith.* An Hypocrite is contented with the *Cheri* and *Chetib* (if I may ſo ſay) of Religion, the Criticiſms and Punctilio's of Chriſtianity, but a ſincere Mind is always taken up with the beſt and greateſt, the ſollideſt and ſubſtantialeſt Things of it. This then is another infallible Teſt of the evangelical Accuracy, that we have a higher regard for the main and principal Matters of Religion than for thoſe that are only ſubſervient and acceſſory.

Sixthly, THIS chriſtian Exactneſs is oppos'd to *Apoſtacy* and *Back-ſliding*, and ſo it obliges us to *increaſe* every Day more and more in Holineſs, to *abound* in Grace, and to perſevere in the Ways of Goodneſs. Περιπατεῖν is the Word here uſed to expreſs the Chriſtian's Life and Converſation, and that very fitly; for *Walking* is a continued Motion. Eſpecially with the Addition of the Prepoſition περὶ, it inhances the Thing hugely, and ſets forth a Reſolute perſiſting in Godlineſs, and a taking in of the whole Compaſs and Circumference of Religion. The Apoſtle St. *Peter*'s Advice is very pertinent here, and expreſſes the Senſe of this which I am now ſpeaking of, *Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance*, &c. *for if theſe things be in you and abound, they will make you that you ſhall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge* (i. e. the practical and experimental Knowledge) *of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 2d Epiſt. Chap. 1. Ver. 5. to 10. where he adds, *if ye do theſe things you ſhall never fail:* Your daily increaſing in all Virtue and Goodneſs will ſo confirm you in Grace, and in the divine Favour, that you ſhall perſevere to the End of your Lives without defection.

Seventhly and laſtly, THIS moſt accurate and ſtrict Life of a Chriſtian, is no leſs than an *aiming* and *endeavouring after Perfection.* A good Man hath no ſmall Regret on his Soul that he can love God no more, and that he ſo often offends him; for which he is unſpeakably ſorry, and continually labours for greater Degrees of Holineſs, and, if it were poſſible, a compleat and entire Conqueſt over all Sin. He labours and endeavours, I ſay, and that is all he can do. Thus the great St. *Paul,* the ſeraphic Doctor, the Poſſeſſor of innumerable Gifts and Graces, the Maſter of as high Accompliſhments in Chriſtianity as any Saint on Earth ever was, reckons not himſelf in the Number of the *Comprehenſors,* but (with a happy Change of his former Employment, though not of the Name) *Perſecutors, Followers-after, I count not myſelf,** ſaith he, *to have apprehended, but this one thing I do; forgetting thoſe things which are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before, I preſs toward the mark for the price of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which alſo I am apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus.* Obſerve here, *following after, reaching forth,* and *preſſing towards,* are the Terms the bleſſed Apoſtle uſes to expreſs that Degree of Grace, that Height of Virtue which he had arrived to.

* *Phil.* iii. 12. &c.

AND this indeed is the chriſtian and evangelical Perfection, as you may ſatisfy yourſelves, if you carry your Eye forward to the 15th Verſe of that Chapter, *Let us therefore, as many as be Perfect, be thus Minded.* This is the only *Perfection* which is like to be the Attainment of Chriſtians on this Side of Heaven. This is the *Exactneſs* which the Apoſtle enjoins in my Text: And let us all uſe our utmoſt Endeavours to attain to it. Our Saviour would have our *Light* (the *Light* of our good Works) *ſhine,* Matt. v. *16.* that is, ſhew itſelf in a more than ordinary Strictneſs of Life, in an Exactneſs of Converſation; for *Splendour* is the utmoſt Tendency and Effort of Light. Let us then *grow* and *encreaſe* with the Encreaſes of God, let us aſpire after Perfection, and earneſtly long after a compleat Freedom from Sin. Let us fight and combate with our ſinful Appetites and Deſires; let us muſter up all our Forces, and make the moſt powerful Reſiſtances that our preſent Condition is capable of, and approach as near to Victory and Triumph as we can. And thus I have briefly diſplay'd unto you the true Nature of this *Exactneſs* and *Circumſpection* commended here by St. *Paul.* [*Pauſe.*]

AND now upon a Review of all that hath been ſaid, do we not bluſh to reflect upon ourſelves, and to obſerve how ſtrangely we come ſhort of the *chriſtian Exactneſs?* One paſſionately cried out upon reading ſome Paſſages in the Goſpel, and comparing them with the Practice of the World, either this is not Goſpel, or we are not Chriſtians. The like may be ſaid here, either this is not the Goſpel-Exactneſs and Circumſpection, or we are not the Perſons who have made any proficiency in it. Where can we look and diſcover this Accurateneſs of Life and Converſation which I have deſcribed? Nay, where is it not diſlik'd and diſcommended, and by the viler Sort of Men (who are the greateſt Number every where) *derided,* who have nothing indeed to vouch them to be rational Creatures but their Laughter. But tell me, is not Strictneſs, is not Accuracy aim'd at, and highly commended in all Arts and Sciences, in all Functions and Profeſſions? And ſhall it be blamable only in Chriſtianity, which is the nobleſt Art and moſt excellent Science? If in all Profeſſions Men ſtudy to excel, and are ambitious to out-ſtrip their Neighbours, why ſhould not *Chriſtianity* inſpire us with a more generous and worthy Emulation? Did St. *Paul preſs towards the Mark,* and had he it ever in his Eye, and ſhall we ſhoot at Rovers, and run at Random? Shall we have no Regard of the *Mark,* and no Eſteem for the *Prize* that is ſet before us?

I BESEECH you recollect yourſelves, and condemn your ſhameful Neglect and Ingratitude, you eſpecially who have attain'd to great Knowledge in Religion, and have *taſted of the heavenly Gift, and the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come.* It is an Obſervation of one of the Antients, that *Moſes* for a little Fault was denied the entring into *Canaan*[*]: God would teach us by this, ſaith he, that he requires an extreme Accuracy of thoſe that are his Servants, and have attain'd ſome Degree of Perfection. The Character which the ungodly give of the righteous Man is true, *His Life is not like other Mens, his Ways are of another Faſhion*, Wiſd. ii. 15. *Chriſtians* more eſpecially muſt differ in their Lives from all other Men; they muſt be eminent and exemplary in their Manners; their Practice muſt be anſwerable to the excellent Religion they profeſs. They need not fear their being *too ſtrict*: Their Endeavours after Holineſs are not likely to be exceſſive and above the Rule. They cannot be too accurate and exact, they cannot be too ſtrict and circumſpect. Was it ever heard that any levell'd too evenly, or ſhot too near the Mark? The Chriſtian's Life is an aiming at Heaven, a levelling at the Stars, or rather ſomething beyond them. Eternal Bliſs and Glory are the Prize he contends for, and therefore his Pains and Labour cannot be too great.

To *excite* you to this Chriſtian Exactneſs and Circumſpection which I have been inſiſting upon, I pray let theſe following Conſiderations be entertain'd by you:

1. THINK how ſtrict the Principles and Rules of Chriſtianity are, and accordingly what great Improvements were intended by them. The Inſtitution of the Goſpel deſign'd us for greater Perfection than ever was attain'd by the ceremonious *Jew*, or the moſt accompliſh'd *Gentile*. *Chriſt loved the Church, and gave himſelf for it, that he might ſanctify and cleanſe it with the waſhing of Water, by the Word, that he might preſent it to himſelf a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any ſuch thing, but that it ſhould be holy and without Blemiſh*, Eph. v. 25, &c. Blemiſhes are hugely unbecoming the Spouſe of Chriſt: No *Spot* muſt appear upon her, that is, no great and enormous Sin; no *Wrinkle* muſt be ſeen, that is, not ſo much as a leſſer and ſmaller Default. She ought to be thus complete, that ſhe may (as ſhe is here ſtiled) deſerve the Title of a *glorious Church*, even whilſt ſhe is here in a State of Grace. The Strictneſs of Chriſtianity is ſufficiently aſſerted by our Saviour, when he aſſures us that *ſtreight is the Gate, and narrow is the Way, that leads to Life, and that the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffers Violence.* I will add that eminent Place *Tit.* ii. 11, 12. which you will eaſily believe is an Epitome of the whole Goſpel, and gives you a brief but full Account of the Strictneſs of the Chriſtian Laws. *The Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath appear'd unto all Men, teaching us, that denying Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godlily in this preſent World, looking for that bleſſed Hope, and the glorious Appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar People zealous of good Works.* So exact is the Inſtitution of our Bleſſed Lord and Redeemer, and therefore it is fitting that our Lives ſhould hold ſome Proportion with it.

2. BESIDES the Doctrine of Chriſtianity and the Deſign and Purpoſe of Chriſt in it, I may adjoin the moſt holy, exact, and exemplary Life of our bleſſed Maſter, and on this Conſideration I may urge you to a wary and circumſpect walking; for the Life of a Chriſtian ſhould be no other than a Conformity to the Life of Chriſt. We are to follow his Steps, and to reckon his Actions to be our Pattern. How then can we be covetous and worldly? How can we be proud and arrogant? How can we be hard-hearted and uncharitable? or how can we be ſoft and effeminate, wanton and luxurious, when we remember how ſevere and holy, how blameleſs and unſpotted our dear Lord was, how chaſte and temperate, how devout and heavenly-minded, how humble and meek, how loving and charitable he was? He expreſs'd through the whole Courſe of his Life ſo perfect and entire a Virtue, that the ſtubborn *Jews*, his moſt implacable Adverſaries, could ſay of him, that *he had done all Things well.* Behold here our great Example! The eternal Word was made Fleſh, and vouchſafed to dwell with Men on Earth, to fit them by his holy Rules, and his exemplifying them himſelf, to dwell with him in Heaven. We are therefore indiſpenſibly obliged to a ſtrict and accurate Life. How exactly ſhould we walk when we look upon this exact Pattern ſet before us? How earneſtly ſhould we labour for this ἀκρίβεια, this Strictneſs and Accuracy of Converſation, this grand Improvement and Height of Chriſtianity, when we ſet our Saviour before our Eyes?

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[*] Διδάσκει ἡμᾶς ὁ Δεσπότης διὰ τούτων ὡς τοὺς ἐν ἀρετῇ τελείους τὴν ἄκραν ἀκρίβειαν ἀπαιτεῖ. Mic. Glyc.

3. Consider how great Helps and Aſſiſtances God is pleas'd to afford you, and you will conclude it reaſonable to walk with great Exactneſs and Strictneſs. The cruel and unmerciful Task-maſters in *Ægypt* preſs'd the *Iſraelites* to make Brick, but would not give them their Allowance of Straw. We deal with no ſuch hard Maſter. God the Father and his Son Chriſt Jeſus require nothing of us, unto the Performance of which they do not give us ſufficient Helps and Allowances. And the Holy Spirit helps our Infirmities, and conducts us into the Ways of Godlineſs, and fits us for the diſcharging of all the Duties which are requir'd of us. On this Account conſider what manner of Perſons you ought to be in all holy Converſation and Godlineſs. As your Helps and Aids are great, ſo muſt your Lives be eminently holy and exemplary.

4. Think with how many Dangers you are every Moment environ'd, and you will be concern'd to walk circumſpectly, to tread cautiouſly, to live orderly and regularly. This World is hung about with Snares, beſet with various Temptations, and the Spirit of Darkneſs, that great Enemy of God and our Souls, is ever plotting and contriving our Ruin. There are innumerable Objects before our Eyes, which may diſcourage us from leading a holy Life, which are apt to call us off from our Duty, and to divert us from our great Employment: Therefore we have all the Reaſon in the World to take Heed, to be very wary and cautious, to walk by Line and Level.

5. Set before you, and often ſeriouſly repreſent to your Thoughts, the everlaſting Rewards of Heaven. *Every man that ſtriveth for the maſtery,* ſaith our Apoſtle, *is temperate in all things,* (meaning it of the laborious Exerciſes and Enterprizes of the Olympick Games:) *now they do it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore ſo run, not as uncertainly, ſo fight I, not as one that beateth the Air, but I keep under my Body and bring it into Subjection.* It is for no other than an *incorruptible Crown,* it is for no leſs than *Heaven,* that the Apoſtle runs, and fights, and ſtrives; therefore it is no Wonder that he is ſo ſtrict a Maſter of Temperance and Chaſtity, for one or both of theſe I ſuppoſe he means by *keeping under his Body:* It is no Wonder that he uſeth all the Diligence and Care imaginable in working out his Salvation. Immortality and Glory are the Prize that he runs for, and this makes him *preſs forward toward the Mark* (as he ſpeaks in another place) this makes him uſe his utmoſt Endeavours to come at it. Let this then be ever in your Thoughts, remember that you ſtrive for everlaſting Life and Happineſs: And let this prevail with you to be very accurate, very induſtrious and diligent.

I cannot apply the common Story of the *Limner* better than here: That famous Artiſt was wont to take up a great deal of Time in finiſhing his Pictures and Pourtrays, whereas others of that Profeſſion made quick diſpatch, and had ſoon done their Work: He being ask'd why he was ſo long at his, and why ſo curious and exact? Gave this ſhort Anſwer, *I paint for Eternity,* i. e. I do my Work ſo, that all future Ages ſhall applaud me, I deſign my ſelf a perpetual Reward of Fame. Did we but conſider that every Line we draw in our Lives, every Stroke we make, every Enterprize we undertake, is for *Eternity*; if we ſeriouſly thought of this, we ſhould be more accurate and exact, more laborious and induſtrious, in all that we do. We are thoſe that draw and limn for Eternity, we labour for that which endureth to everlaſting Life; therefore we cannot be too long and tedious about our Work, we cannot be too diligent and exact about it. Our Labour here muſt be brought before an impartial Judge hereafter, and if it be found that we have diſcharged our Task aright, we ſhall receive for it an infinite Reward. Be exhorted then to ſpare no Pains and Labour, to act with all your Might and Vigour, knowing that *your Labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord*; Heaven will be a ſufficient Recompence for whatever you did or ſuffer'd here on Earth.

Let me add this one Conſideration more, that an exact and exemplary Life is the beſt (if not the only) way you can take to work upon others, to amend the ſinful World, to reclaim Men from their Follies, to win them to the embracing of Religion and Holineſs, which I doubt not you think is a Deſign well worth your proſecuting; and I aſſure you it was never more neceſſary than at this time, when the World is ſo degenerate, and when we can't find Chriſtianity among Chriſtians. Let the avowed Friends of Atheiſm and Debauchery ſay what they will, there is a certain Charm in Goodneſs and Vertue : And ſome Men, I believe, have much ado to reſiſt its holy Inchantments. There is Force and Majeſty in a holy Life, there is an attractive Virtue in it, which it is very hard to over-power. If we would do any good upon this vicious Generation, it cannot be more effectually done than by making *ſtreight Steps* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) by walking exactly, and conſequently by diſgracing all Vice and Wickedneſs by a holy and ſtrict Life. This, if any thing, will vindicate the Credit and Honour of Religion, this will bring it into Eſteem among Men, and cauſe them to love it.

WHEREAS, on the contrary, thoſe Perſons that profeſs Religion, and yet act counter to it, beat off others from embracing it. Wicked and ſcandalous Actions in thoſe that profeſs otherwiſe, ſtartle Beholders, and make them fly back from Chriſtianity, as that *Indian* who would rather be damned than go to the Paradice of the *Spaniards*. Nothing is more obvious than this, that many Perſons continue averſe to Religion, becauſe the Profeſſors of it do ſo ſeldom commend it by their Practice. What Reaſon have weak and ignorant People to believe what theſe Men declare and profeſs with their Mouths, *viz.* that Holineſs is indiſpenſibly neceſſary to Happineſs, when they ſee plainly that they themſelves who profeſs this, take a quite contrary Courſe, when they every Day behold how their Practice is diſagreeable to what they declare? In this too many *Chriſtians* are like ſome *Philoſophers* of old, who writ well, and diſcours'd excellently againſt Covetouſneſs, Pride, and other Immoralities, but they lived not at the ſame Rate they ſpoke or dictated, and ſo became ridiculous. For the People ſoon found the double dealing of theſe Men, who it ſeems had one Body of Ethicks to ſhape their Diſcourſes or Writings by, but another to live by.

BUT let not any, who call themſelves *Chriſtians*, be guilty of ſo groſs an Abſurdity; let it be their Care to diſcover the real Virtue of Chriſtianity in their Minds by an holy and exemplary Converſation; let them take heed that their Words and Profeſſions do not out-run their Actions and Manners. If they ſincerely intend to do any Good upon the World, they cannot better effect it than by living according to the exact Rules of Chriſtianity; they cannot more ſucceſsfully confute Vice, than by acting the contrary. As they tell us that *Diogenes* of old, when he met with a Man who was ſo abſurd as to deny all Motion, preſently acted the *Peripatetick* before his Eyes, *i. e.* he took a *Walk* to confute him. What Effect that viſible Argument had upon the Man, I do not read; but ſurely it was the beſt way the Cynick could have taken to baffle ſuch an arrant Sceptick. Thus, I tell you, you may confute Atheiſts and prophane Men, by your *walking*, even that which the Text mentions, *walking circumſpectly*; you may ſhame and confound them by a holy and religious Converſation, and this is the beſt and wiſeſt Courſe you can take to do it. For the Practice of Religion is the moſt prevailing Logick, and the moſt perſwaſive Rhetorick: And it is certain that this hath been effectual and powerful where the moſt pathetick and inſinuating Diſcourſes, where the moſt artificial and elaborate Arguments have avail'd nothing.

LET me, in the Cloſe of all, pronounce this as an unqueſtionable Truth, that there is no better Account to be given of the general Decay of Piety and the Fewneſs of Converts to Religion in theſe Days, than the unbecoming Lives of thoſe who pretend to Chriſtianity. Their Examples do more Hurt, than all their fair Speeches and Profeſſions are able to do Good. This is the grand Source of the ſpreading Wickedneſs of theſe Times. Wherefore above all Things ſee that you amend your Lives, that you order your Converſations aright, and that in all Things you carry yourſelves diſcreetly and prudently toward thoſe whom you converſe with, and that you make Conſcience of redeeming the Time, according to what our Apoſtle adds in the next Clauſe of the Words, *Not as Fools, but as Wiſe; redeeming the Time becauſe the Days are evil.*

A
DISCOURSE
OF
Chriſtian Wiſdom or Prudence.

EPHES. V. 15.

Not as Fools, but as Wiſe.

HAVING diſpatched the firſt Obſervable in the Text, which was the grand Duty incumbent on us, *viz.* that *we walk circumſpectly*, I proceed now to the particular Inſtances of this Duty, and they are *Chriſtian Wiſdom* and *redeeming the Time*. The firſt eminent and ſignal Act of Circumſpection is a *wiſe* and *prudent Behaviour*. For the firſt Clauſe of the Words according to the *Greek* ſhould run thus, * *See how* (not *that*) *ye walk circumſpectly*. If I may have Leave to vary from our Tranſlation, I conceive this is the true and proper rendering of it, for that the *Greek* Word πῶς is to be tranſlated [*how*] when it follows [βλέπετε] is clear from *Luke* viii. 18. † *Take heed how you hear*, and ſo in other Places. Here then this Word is a *Modification* of the accurate and circumſpect walking before-mention'd, and accordingly it is anſwered with [ὡς *as*] not *as* Fools, but *as* Wiſe.

To know the true Import of theſe Words, let us conſult *Col. iv.* 5. where it is very probable the Apoſtle gives the ſame Advice with this which we read here, but in other Words. *Walk in Wiſdom*, ſaith he, *toward them that are without:* And immediately he adjoins, *redeeming the Time*, which is the very Council of my Text; and therefore it is likely that the former Admonition is the very ſame with this here, only it is more fully and plainly ſet down. The *Wiſdom* then in the Text is a wary and prudential Carriage towards thoſe we converſe with in the World, two Sorts of Perſons eſpecially, namely, the *prophane*, who in the ſtricteſt Senſe *are without*, and the *weak* and ſcrupulous, who may be ſtiled *thoſe without*, they being not yet entred into the *Penetralia*, the inmoſt Parts of Religion, they being not throughly acquainted with the Secrets of the Kingdom of God, and being (in the Apoſtle's Language) but *Babes in Chriſt*. The old *Pythagoreans* had two Sorts of Diſciples, ** the *Extrinſicks, thoſe without*, and the †† *Intrinſicks*, ſuch as were *within*, and were call'd by them τέλειοι, the *compleat* and *perfect:* The former were Probationers and Novices in their Philoſophy, the latter were Proficients, or Graduates, if I may ſo call them. And in relation to theſe two, there were amongſt them (ſaith *A. Gellius*) *Exoetrick Books*, i. e. Books of plain and eaſy Matter, fitted to the Capacity of thoſe former ſort of Perſons: And there were likewiſe *Acroamatick Books*, i. e. Books of deep and ſubtile Learning,

* Βλέπετε πῶς.

† Βλέπετε πῶς.

** Ἐξωτερικόι.

†† Ἐισωτερικόι.

Learning, ſuitable to the latter Rank of Men. There is the like Diſtinction in *Chriſtianity*, and our great care and ſtudy muſt be that we wiſely deport ourſelves towards thoſe that are Novices in Religion, weak and imperfect Chriſtians: we muſt be careful that we Offend not one of theſe little ones.

Secondly, WE are to carry ourſelves wiſely towards the Wicked and Prophane: and theſe in the Apoſtle's Days were of two Ranks, *viz.* firſt thoſe that were not yet Converted to Chriſtianity among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*. And you often find our Apoſtle admoniſhing the Perſons he writes to, that they ſo behave themſelves that theſe may not be hardned in their Sins. The other Sort of Prophane are thoſe who profeſs Chriſtianity, but renounce it in their Lives and Actions, who are called Chriſtians, but diſhonour that Name by their ungodly and licentious Practices: And theſe are the Wicked, *and thoſe without* towards whom we are to order our Converſation aright.

ALTHOUGH then the more *general Remark* upon this Clauſe of the Text is this, that we cannot diſcover our chriſtian *Circumſpection* and *Exactneſs* in a more eminent Inſtance than in our walking Wiſely and Reſervedly, and not as fooliſh and indiſcreet Men are wont to do: Yet the *particular Propoſition* I am to treat you with is this, That our chriſtian Converſation ought to be in Wiſdom even towards *thoſe which are without*, whether they be *Weak* or *Wicked* (for I take this Precept in my Text to be the ſame with that to the *Coloſſians*).

Firſt then, IT is to be ſuppoſed that there are *weak* and *tender Chriſtians* whom we are to converſe with. The State of God's Servants being imperfect in this Life, their Knowledge and Diſcoveries not being Compleat, their Apprehenſions and Conceptions not being Commenſurate to the great and myſterious Objects they converſe with, their Doubts and Scruples being many, and their Temptations being no leſs, it cannot be thought ſtrange that there is in the Church of Chriſt a conſiderable Number (though far ſhort of the multitudes of prophane ones) whom I may call *weak* and *ſtaggering Chriſtians*. Now this we ought to be perſwaded of, that it is our indiſpenſible Duty to demean ourſelves *not as fools, but as wiſe* towards theſe tender and ſickly Members of Chriſt: Our diſcreet deportment toward theſe may be ſumm'd up in this one material Rule, Always deal with infirm and ſcrupulous Chriſtians with extraordinary Pity and Tenderneſs. But this *general Direction* will diſplay itſelf in theſe following *Particulars:*

1. CONDESCEND to their Capacities, liſten to their Scruples, endeavour to underſtand them aright, and ſtrive to make all your Anſwers to them plain and intelligible. There are ſome who indiſcreetly confound theſe poor Souls, and bring them into a Maze; they neither ſhew them the Vanity of their own Scruples, nor return ſuch Anſwers to them as may eaſily be underſtood. But you muſt do both theſe, you muſt let them ſee how groundleſs their Doubts are, how weakly they argue, how lamely they conclude. You muſt alſo diſcover to them the Reaſons on the other Side; you muſt take Pains to lay theſe before them, and to convince them of the clearneſs of them, and when they ſtart new Scruples, you muſt be ſo kind as to anſwer them no leſs than the old ones, and all along you muſt endeavour not ſo much to *put them by*, as to *ſatisfy* them.

2. BE ſtudious and diligent *how* you make your Applications to them, leſt you Offend them inſtead of Edifying them. Take the Advantage of *Time* and *Place*, conſider the *Age*, *Condition*, and particular *Circumſtances* of theſe Perſons, to influence on them the better, and to accompliſh your pious Deſign upon them. Give way to their Frailties and Weakneſſes, and treat them as you would Children and Sick People, bear with their Follies and Infirmities, comply with their innocent Humours, bring them to a fair and pliable Temper by the beſt Methods you can, and then inſtil your Inſtructions and Admonitions into their Minds.

3. IN all that you do for them let them ſee that you heartily deſire to further their Good, that you have no other Deſign than to promote their Eaſe and Satisfaction, and to lend all the Aſſiſtance you can towards ſo good an End. When they are convinced you make this your Aim, they will be the more Attentive to you, and give Ear to all you ſay.

4. BE careful to do all with chriſtian Meekneſs and Compaſſion, and as if it were your own Caſe and Condition. Sympathize with the inward Griefs and

Perplexities of theſe poor Creatures, be throughly ſenſible of the heavy Burthen they lie under. *A wounded Spirit, who can bear?* ſaith *Solomon.* But if you give them your friendly Aid and Aſſiſtance, they will be enabled to bear this Burthen. Be careful to handle this *Wound* gently, ſee that you uſe no Corroſives, but let all your Applications be Suppling and Emollient. *Here is Wiſdom*; and the chriſtian World would be in a great meaſure happy if this prevail'd amongſt us, if chriſtian Brethren would charitably comply with one another, bear one another's Burdens, and ſo fulfil this Law of the Apoſtle, who bids us walk *not as Fools but as Wiſe* towards thoſe we converſe with, particularly the weak ones.

HAVING thus in brief ſhewed you how you are to demean yourſelves *in all Wiſdom* towards theſe, it remains that I direct you in your Carriage towards the *generality of Mankind,* i. e. thoſe who are *wicked,* for I may ſay without the Breach of Charity, theſe are the greateſt Part we converſe with. But before I undertake this I will ſpeak ſomething to prepare you for it. God is pleaſed to let his Children live among the wicked in this World: The Corn and Tares grow up together in the ſame Field: The Flowers and Weeds are encloſed in the ſame Garden. The great Difference and Diſtinction between theſe two Ranks of Men ſhall moſt eminently appear at the laſt Doom of the World, when the Sheep and the Goats ſhall be ſeparated by an unerring Hand, but in the mean time they converſe and intercommon together, and that for ſuch good Reaſons as theſe:

1. TO make an Experiment of their free Choice of Good or Evil, Life or Death, which are ſet before them. The good Man muſt give apparent Proof of his inward Uprightneſs and ſincere Love of Holineſs, by chooſing this when the contrary is moſt applauded and practiſed, when the Ways of Religion and Godlineſs are diſparaged, and adhering to God and Goodneſs is ſcoffed at. Now the righteous Perſon is tried whether he will cleave to the World or abandon it, *i. e.* the Vices of it, whether he will hold faſt his Integrity, or purſue the Vanities and ungodly Cuſtoms which have got repute among Men.

2. IT is the purpoſe of divine Wiſdom to refine and purify the Good by mixing them with the Ungodly. This may ſeem a ſtrange Paradox, but yet it is an undoubted Truth: For God deſigns to improve and perfect the Graces of his Servants by the Reproaches and Affronts, by the Injuries and evil Uſages which they meet with from the World. Their Faith and Patience, their Courage and Reſolution, their Self-denial and Humility, their Conſtancy and Perſeverance ſhall be exerted to the full, and all theſe ſhall be wonderfully Increaſed and Augmented, Strengthned and Confirmed by that continual Exerciſe. They ſhall learn to deſpiſe this Earth, and long for Heaven, and fit themſelves for the Poſſeſſion of that Place into which no wicked and unclean Thing ſhall ever enter. I might add likewiſe,

3dly, THAT this happens to ſhew God's unſpeakable Patience and Forbearance. He is pleaſed to ſuſpend the Execution of his utmoſt Wrath againſt wicked Men, and to ſuffer them to live and enjoy the good Things of this World, and to be mix'd with the Godly and Righteous, that his Clemency and Goodneſs may lead them to Repentance and Amendment of their Ways. Theſe are ſufficient Grounds for God's Dealings in this Nature, though I might add, beſides all this, that the Frame and Conſtitution of the World is ſuch, the Nature of Men, whoſe Wills incline them either to Good or Evil, is of this ſort, (which without doubt is according to the exacteſt Wiſdom and Foreſight) ſo that things cannot be otherwiſe than I have repreſented them to you; that is, Sin and Vice will reign in the World, and conſequently good Men are forced to converſe with the Wicked as long as they are on Earth.

THIS being premiſed, I come now to give you an Account of the important Duty in the Text: Seeing we muſt neceſſarily traffick and negociate with wicked and diſſolute Men, and ſeeing they are ſo numerous, we are concern'd to deport ourſelves aright towards them, that Religion may not be diſparaged and diſhonoured. Would you then walk *not as Fools but as Wiſe?* would you behave yourſelves Prudently and Inoffenſively towards theſe, endeavour to diſcover it by theſe following things; firſt, by a humble, meek, and gentle Spirit. 2. By a peaceable and loving Temper. 3. By avoiding intimate Converſe with prophane and diſſolute Perſons, and by delighting in the Society of thoſe that are truly Godly. 4. By a ſtrict Obſervance of Juſtice and Righteouſneſs among Men. 5. By abandoning Worldlineſs and Covetouſneſs, and looking after thoſe things that are Divine and Heavenly. 6. By a living chearfully and contentedly in all Conditions of Life. 7. By being always more ſevere to ourſelves than to others. 8. By being cautious in the uſe of lawful and innocent Things. *9thly,* and *laſtly,* By taking care not to be Partakers of other Mens Sins.

Firſt, I SAY, we may more eminently convince the World that we have attained to chriſtian *Wiſdom* and *Prudence* by our being of a *humble* and *meek Spirit.* There is nothing looks ſo unbecoming a Perſon that profeſſes Godlineſs as *Pride.* This is the greateſt Stain of Chriſtianity, and renders us unworthy of the very Name of Chriſtians. For why do we make bold to ſtile ourſelves Diſciples of the meekeſt Perſon that ever lived upon the Earth, and yet behave ourſelves Inſolently and Arrogantly, look big with proud Conceits of our own Worth, vaunt and boaſt of our Endowments, deſpiſe our Brethren, and entertain a mean Eſteem for all but ourſelves? Is this to live like a Follower of Jeſus Chriſt, who bid us learn of Him to be *meek and lowly in Heart? I am ſo,* ſaith he, I quitted the Regions of celeſtial Glory, and came down to viſit the Sons of Men that lay here gaſping and periſhing; I aſſumed their human Nature, that I might inveſt them with a divine one; I lived in Meanneſs and Poverty, and ſubmitted to the loweſt and vileſt Offices; I converſed with Sinners, I condeſcended to the worſt of Men, I humbled myſelf to Death, even the Death of the Croſs, that diſgraceful Puniſhment of Slaves and Miſcreants.

AND what ſhall not a Chriſtian deign to do who hath ſo admirable an Example of *Humility* ſet before him? How Affable and Courteous, how Obliging and Condeſcending ſhould he be in the whole Tenour of his Life? If we profeſs to follow Chriſt, let us be careful to imitate him in his Meekneſs and Self-denial. Let us be Humble, or elſe renounce the glorious Title which we bear: Let us not refuſe a humble Converſe with the meaneſt and loweſt: Let us aſſure ourſelves that a proud and domineering Chriſtian is the higheſt Soliciſm imaginable. But to walk Humbly is a ſingular Inſtance of *chriſtian Wiſdom* and *Prudence,* for hereby we ſhall grace our Profeſſion, and credit that excellent Religion which we have eſpouſed: Hereby we ſhall commend Chriſtianity to the World, and invite *thoſe that are without* to *come in* and acquaint themſelves with its Beauty, and by degrees come to be in love with it, and paſſionately to embrace it: For it is certain there is nothing more Charming than Humility and Meekneſs.

2. MAKE a viſible Proof of your *walking Wiſely* by being of a *peaceable* and *quiet,* a *loving* and *charitable* Temper, and that, *firſt,* among yourſelves, *ſecondly,* towards all Men. Let your firſt Care be that you diſgrace not Religion by falling out among yourſelves. Sacred and eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory will inform you how unhappy and fatal this hath proved to the Church of Chriſt. When *Paul* and *Barnabas* (Fellow-ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt) are ſeen to fight with one another, when *Chryſoſtom* and *Epiphanius* (two good and holy Fathers) are mutually guilty of uncharitable Conteſts, when *Jerom* and *Ruffinus* (another Pair of eminent primitive Chriſtians) openly and ſcandalouſly inveigh againſt one another, when *Luther* and *Zuinglius* (both of them worthy Servants of God, and ſignal Inſtruments of Reformation) tilt and run at each other, how chearful do the Enemies of Religion appear? Methinks I hear them open their Mouths in the Poet's Words,

———*Tantæne animis cæleſtibus iræ?*

Can Wrath and Anger, which ſmell of the Sulphur of the bottomleſs Pit, be found reaking in the Breaſts of heavenly Men? They ſtudy upon ſo welcome an Occaſion as this, not only to villify and declaim againſt theſe diſſenting and quarreling Perſons, but they proceed even to defy all Piety and Goodneſs. And indeed, how can they believe there is that Force and Virtue in Religion which the Profeſſors of it do ſo warmly diſcourſe of? O! let not our uncharitable Behaviour open the Mouths of wicked and prophane Men thus to reflect upon our Religion, and to load it with Obloquies and Reproaches. If we have that real Eſteem and Value for the Cauſe of God which we are willing others ſhould believe we have; let us diſcover it by our intimate Love and entire Agreement with one another.

REMARKABLE is that Advice of our Apoſtle in *Phil.* i. 27. *Only let your converſation be as becometh the goſpel of Chriſt.* This is, as it were, the only thing we are concerned in, this alone is enough to make us compleat Chriſtians, *viz.* that we act as *becometh* the Goſpel of Chriſt, that we do things worthy of our high Calling. And if you would have a particular Inſtance of this becoming Carriage, you may be ſupplied with it in the following Words of this Verſe, *That whether I come and ſee you, or elſe be abſent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye ſtand faſt in one ſpirit, with one mind, ſtriving together for the faith of the goſpel.*

HE would have the chriſtian *Philippians* to be *of one Spirit* and *one Mind*; he would have them *ſtrive*, but *ſtrive together*, not *againſt one another.* This is the only lawful Strife, this is a noble and worthy Contention, and hereby you will not diſcredit but commend Religion. Throw aſide all uncharitable Diſputes and Wranglings, agree in the main, unite in the principal thing, ſhew your ſincere Love to God by loving one another, expreſs your regards to Religion by your reciprocal Affections and inviolable Concord.

A PARALLEL place to that I juſt now produced, is in *Eph.* iv. 1, 2. *I beſeech you,* ſaith the Apoſtle, *that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called*; that ye be ſo wiſe as to act agreeably to that Profeſſion of Chriſtianity which you make, the particular Inſtances of which are ſet down in the next Words, *With all lowlineſs and meekneſs* (which was the firſt Head I inſiſted on) *forbearing one another, love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace,* which is the thing I am now inſiſting on. By your mutual Love and Unity you will wonderfully advance the Deſign of the Goſpel, and bring credit to the chriſtian Religion. By being kindly Affectionate one towards another, you will give an undeniable Demonſtration of a truly evangelical primitive Spirit; for the Saints of thoſe early Times were celebrated for nothing ſo much as their zealous Affection to one another: Inſomuch that the *Pagans* uſed to cry out, Behold how the Chriſtians love one another! You may read in eccleſiaſtical Story, that when St. *John* was very Aged, and could not ſtand to make long Diſcourſes to his Auditors, he uſed only to aſcend the Pulpit and repeat theſe Words, *Brethren, love one another*: And that ſeaſonable Leſſon, with the holy Man's Benediction, was inſtead of a Sermon and Prayer to them.

But, *Secondly,* YOUR Love muſt not be confined to the *Brethren,* but muſt ſpread itſelf to *all* you converſe with. Have an univerſal Reſentment of the Condition of Mankind. Be merciful as your Father in Heaven is merciful, who maketh his Sun to ſhine on the Evil as well as the Good. Extend your Compaſſion and Kindneſs in a very large Circumference: Weep with thoſe that weep, and rejoice with thoſe that do rejoice: Bear a Part both in the Sufferings and Felicities of others. Charity which is *the more excellent way* (according to our Apoſtle) and which is the greateſt Teſtimony of an excellent and generous Mind, *endureth all things.* Nothing comes amiſs to this Grace: Thoſe who are the Maſters of it are taught to deport themſelves with an even, calm, and peaceable Spirit towards all Men. They are not Fierce and Feveriſh, they are not Hot and Hectick, but they meaſure every thing without Paſſion and Precipitency. When they have juſt Occaſion to be Angry, they ſhew they are not of an implacable Genius, they ſuffer not the Sun to go down on their Wrath, they are eaſily intreated, and willing to forgive Injuries, they reckon it the Glory of a Chriſtian to paſs by Offences, and to overcome evil with good. Let me perſwade you then to ſpend your Anger and Wrath upon the Vices of others, and not upon their Perſons. Bear good-will to all, and endeavour to do good to thoſe who never do ſo to themſelves. Remember that God is Love, and Charity, and Amity are the Image of the Deity: But that unchriſtian Calenture which burns and rages ſo Epidemically in the Hearts of Men, is nothing a-kin to that holy and god-like Flame which came down from Heaven, and glows in the Breaſts of all true Chriſtians, and is the greateſt Ornament and Glory of thoſe that profeſs ſo holy an Inſtitution. Be *wiſe* therefore in ſuppreſſing all undue Heats and Animoſities, and in maintaining Peace and Love, not only among yourſelves, but towards all Men.

3. THOUGH you ought to maintain a loving and ſociable Converſe with the World, yet Chriſtian *Wiſdom* directs you to abhor and avoid all intimate Commerce and Friendſhip with ſuch as you know to be profeſs'd Enemies to Virtue and Godlineſs, and are openly prophane, and refuſe to be reclaim'd from their abominable Practices. *Be not ye Partakers with them*, ſaith our Apoſtle in this Chapter, * a little before my Text, and again preſently after he ſaith, *Walk as Children of Light, and have no Fellowſhip with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs.* So that you ſee the *Connection* of the Words leads me to what I now offer to you. This is a neceſſary Point of *Wiſdom*, that you abſtain from the Society of graceleſs and wicked Men. Though you cannot altogether ſhun their Company (for then you muſt needs go out of the World, as the Apoſtle ſaith) yet you may avoid all aſſociating with them in a familiar and intimate Manner. Indeed our Saviour did eat with Publicans and Sinners, and we are told in St. *Jerom's* Life, that that good Father would go ſometimes to Taverns and Places of publick Entertainment to obſerve the Manners of Men, and to undertake to reform and reclaim them. But common Chriſtians are not hereby licenſed to venture on ſo hazardous a Task and Employment, but their Care muſt be to ſhun all ſuch vicious Company as may by too near a Commerce influence on their Minds or Practices.

* Ver. 7.

I PRAY let this undeniable Maxim be remembred, that wicked and lewd Companions will ſooner infect you, than you can reclaim them. They will with more Eaſe draw you off from your Duty, than you can diſſwade them from their vicious Courſes. And if they can once induce you to be like themſelves, they think Guilt juſtifiable, and your Compliance and Example ſhall legitimate all their wicked Actions. What a dangerous Blow is hereby given to Religion! The very Devils rejoice at this, they triumph at the vicious Manners of thoſe that profeſs a Love to Chriſtianity and its holy Laws. A drunken Nazarite! a wicked Chriſtian! a lewd Profeſſor! What foul Scandals are theſe. *See then that ye walk circumſpectly, not as Fools, but as Wiſe*, cautiouſly ſeparating from the Company of prophane and ungodly Men, leſt the Contagion of their Vices reacheth you, and renders your Lives as evil and deteſtable as theirs.

AND ſhew your *Chriſtian Wiſdom* not only by being averſe to the Society of the Wicked, but by delighting in the Fellowſhip of thoſe that are truly pious and holy. *In the Saints and in the Excellent* muſt be *all your Delight*. Your frequent and conſtant Converſe muſt ſavour of Religion and Piety. Your Diſcourſe muſt not be like the reſt of the World, who are not aſhamed to diſcover the Naughtineſs of their Hearts and the Lewdneſs of their Lives, even by their corrupt Communication and unſavoury Talk. It is worth your obſerving therefore, that after that Caution in *Col.* iv. 5. *Walk in Wiſdom toward them that are without*, there is adjoined in the next Verſe this Exhortation, *Let your Speech be alway with Grace, ſeaſoned with Salt.* As much as to ſay, you cannot offer a more convincing Teſtimony of your *wiſe* and *prudent Converſe* with thoſe you aſſociate with, than your delighting in ſuch religious Diſcourſe as reliſhes of the inward Senſe and Love of Goodneſs. But how *fooliſhly* as well as ſinfully do Chriſtians behave themſelves, and what a Diſhonour do they bring to Chriſtianity, whilſt their Speeches ſavour of nothing that is holy and pious, and whilſt they love to herd with diſſolute and ungodly Perſons, whoſe whole Converſe is unſavoury, lewd, and prophane?

4. SHEW your godly *Wiſdom* in your ſtrict obſerving of the ſecond Table as well as the firſt. Your Duty to God muſt never exclude that which you owe to your Neighbours, for in diſcharging both you ſerve God. And indeed you cannot perform the one without the other, you cannot ſincerely exerciſe yourſelves in Acts of Reverence and Devotion, if you wholly neglect the Duties of Juſtice and Honeſty. You cannot with an upright Heart look up to God, whilſt in the mean time you deſign to injure Men. Can you offer ſuch a falſe and hypocritical Heart to him? Or, if you do, will he accept it? No certainly.

BUT not only becauſe of *God*, but in regard of *Men* alſo, be ſo *wiſe* as to add the Duties of the ſecond Table to the firſt, for thoſe are acknowledg'd, even by the Men of the World, to be good and laudable, and ſuch as are required of all Mankind: Therefore take heed that you fail not here, leſt they be ſcandalized. Endeavour to excel in all the Works of Morality. For Shame, be not outdone by *Pagans*, many of whom we read celebrated in Hiſtory for their eminent Improvements in this kind. Think of this, that an unjuſt and diſhoneſt Chriſtian is a ſhameful Monſter. Think what a Reproach it is to our holy Religion when it ſhall be ſaid, ſuch a Man who profeſſes Godlineſs is addicted to lying and cheating; and, notwithſtanding his great ſhew of Piety, he forgets to deal honeſtly with Men. See then that you remove this Scandal by living in all good Conſcience towards thoſe who you converſe with in the World. Be very exact in your Dealings with all Men, walk orderly in your ſeveral Places and Stations, be induſtrious and faithful in your Callings, *Study to do your own Buſineſs, and to work with your own Hands, that ye may walk honeſtly toward them that are without,* 1 Theſſ. iv. 11, 12. Do not by any diſhoneſt and irregular Practices give occaſion to wicked Men to ſpeak Evil of Chriſtianity or the Profeſſors of it.

So you find St. [*] *Peter* beſeeching the diſperſed Chriſtians *to have their Converſation honeſt among the Gentiles,* and by way of Explication and Inſtance he immediately exhorts them to *ſubmit themſelves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's Sake, whether it be to the King as ſupreme, or unto Governors* that are deputed and *ſent by him.* Then he commands Servants to be *ſubject to their Maſters with all Fear;* and in the next Chapter he proceeds to teach the Duty of *Wives* and *Huſbands* to each other. The ſhort is, he would have all Chriſtians keep their diſtinct Ranks and Stations, as they have relation to one another, he would have the ſecond Table exactly kept, he would have Chriſtians ſtudy and obſerve all Offices of Morality. This is more largely and fully expreſs'd by St. *Paul* in *Phil.* iv. 8. Whatſoever Things are true, whatſoever Things are honeſt, whatſoever Things are juſt, whatſoever Things are pure, whatſoever Things are lovely, whatſoever Things are of good Report, if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praiſe, think on theſe Things. Whatſoever you obſerve to be good and laudable, whatever is commended to you by the Moraliſts in their Ethicks, think yourſelves concern'd to practice it, for moral Duties muſt go with Chriſtianity, and the joining of theſe two is no mean Specimen of Chriſtian *Wiſdom.*

5. Let your *Prudence* be ſeen in your perfect vanquiſhing of Earthly-mindedneſs and Covetouſneſs. But is this, you will ſay, the part of a *prudent* and *wiſe Chriſtian?* Yes: and it appears thus becauſe the contrary is *Folly,* yea ridiculous Folly, and ſuch as juſtly cauſeth ſome Chriſtians to be ſcoffed at, which a wiſe Man will endeavour to avoid. What will worldly and ſenſual Perſons ſay, or rather, what will they not ſay, when they ſee Men pretend to Heaven, and yet give no Evidence of their minding that place? Do not ſome of you deſerve to be laugh'd at when you cry out of the Vanity of the World, and yet hug it moſt affectionately? Have not thoſe Reaſon to deride you who obſerve how ſollicitous and griping, how eager and impatient you are in your Purſuits after Wealth and Riches, and great Revenues, how you toil and torment yourſelves no leſs than the greateſt Mammoniſts, and thoſe whoſe Portion is in this Life, and who never look for any in another? You act over the abſurd part of that Comedian (but in a worſer way) who cried, *O Heaven!* and looked down to the *Earth.* You run counter to all your fair Pretences, you talk of another World, but you live as if there were none but this. You ſeem to believe and make a Profeſſion of a future State, but the preſent one takes up all your Thoughts, and biaſſes all your Actions. This makes you to be ſcorn'd and laugh'd at, this expoſes you to the Reproach of all Men that take Notice of your Behaviour. Will it not be *prudent* then, both for the Sake of Religion it ſelf and the Spectators that are about you, to behave yourſelves after another Manner, and to convince the World by your Converſations and Practices that you mind Heaven more than Earth, and prefer another World before this?

6. Walk *not as Fools, but as Wiſe,* by living contentedly and chearfully in whatever State of Life it pleaſeth the Divine Providence to place you. Serve God and be joyful, is a Chriſtian's Motto. He hath learnt to live by Faith, which is ever accompanied with Rejoicing. In the worſt and moſt calamitous Times he (like *David* at *Ziglag* when the furious Rabble talk'd of ſtoning him) *encourageth himſelf in the Lord.* His Deportment is the ſame with that of the Prophet *Habakkuk,* or rather the diſtreſſed Church in thoſe Days, [†] *Although the Fig-tree doth not bloſſom, nor is there Fruit in the Vines, though the Labour of the Olive fails, and the Fields yield no Meat, though the Flock be cut off from the Fold, and there be no Herd in the Stalls, yet he rejoiceth in the Lord, he joys in the God of his Salvation.*

[*] 1 *Epiſt.* ii. 12, 13.

[†] *Hab.* iii. 17, 18.

This is the excellent Attainment of thoſe whoſe Hearts are fraught with true Piety; and what is there that can bring greater Honour to Religion and Piety than this? What can render it more venerable and lovely in the Eyes of the World? What abundant Reaſon will Men have to ſpeak and think honourably of Chriſtianity, when they ſhall ſee how it fortifies the Spirits of its true Profeſſors, and makes them bear up undauntedly againſt the greateſt Calamities, and even rejoice and triumph in the midſt of thoſe numerous Croſſes with which they are ſurrounded?

7. DISCOVER your Chriſtian *Prudence* and *Wiſdom* by being always more ſtrict and ſevere to yourſelves than you are to your Neighbours. Our Saviour upbraided the *Phariſees* for *binding heavy Burdens on other Mens Shoulders, whereas they would not themſelves touch them with one of their Fingers:* Hereby teaching us that we muſt not exact that of others which we will not ſubmit to ourſelves. We muſt not take the Liberty to tranſgreſs, and then blame others for doing the ſame or ſomewhat like it. Doſt thou indulge thy ſelf in known Sins, and yet art thou (when thou pleaſeſt) a moſt paſſionate Reprover, and wouldſt be as ſevere a Puniſher of all Sin in others? Bluſh and be aſhamed of this groſs Partiality, and guide thy ſelf always by this Rule, before thou undertakeſt the Correction of other Mens Faults, be ſure that thou makeſt it appear that thou art the ſharpeſt Cenſurer and Reformer of thine own.

8. SHEW your Chriſtian Prudence (and in that your Circumſpection) in being cautious in the uſe of lawful and innocent Things. This being a Matter of great Importance, and yet ſeldom treated of, I ſhall therefore expatiate on it, and give a full and ample Account of it. Here, 1. I will ſhew what I mean by *lawful and innocent Things*. 2. I will aſſign the *general Reaſon* why we muſt be cautious in the uſe of ſuch Things. 3. I will *particularly* ſhew you how the Uſe or rather Abuſe of them becomes unlawful and ſinful. For the firſt, by theſe lawful and innocent Things I mean the ordinary Buſineſſes of this Life, the Trade, Calling, Station, or Employment wherein God hath placed a Man in this World. Every one hath his proper Work and Exerciſe which belongs to him, and this is by the Order and Appointment of Heaven, and therefore it hath nothing of Harm or Fault in it, but on the contrary is lawful and praiſe-worthy. Again, I mean the outward Conveniences, Delights, and Entertainments of this Life, Meat and Drink, Sleep and Repoſe, Health, Peace, Plenty, Friends, Recreations, and the Uſe and Enjoyment of all the good Things of this World. Theſe are in themſelves innocent and lawful becauſe they are natural, that is, they are fitted by God to the Nature and Conſtitution of Man. And ſome of them become abſolutely neceſſary, and on that Account are lawful; for if they were not ſo, God would not have framed our Bodies in ſuch a Manner as they ſhould ſtand in need of them. Yea, thoſe Refreſhments and Delights which are not altogether neceſſary, are yet convenient and lawful, becauſe they adminiſter to innocent Chearfulneſs, which renders the Life of Man more eaſy and pleaſant, and makes him in ſome meaſure more capable of ſerving and praiſing his Creator. Wherefore good and holy Men may uſe theſe Things ſo far as they are not only harmleſs, but ſerviceable to theſe excellent Purpoſes. *Job's Sons went and feaſted in their Houſes every one his Day, and ſent and call'd for their Siſters to eat and drink with them,* Job i. 4, 5. And we do not read that the good Man their Father diſturb'd or interrupted them, but he ſuffer'd them to take their Turns in their friendly Meetings and civil Entertainments of one another. And ſo as to all other Enjoyments, which reſpect either the harmleſs Profits or Pleaſures of this Life, if they be in themſelves and their own Nature innocent, we may conclude that God hath given us Leave to make uſe of them, and that they are commendable and lawful.

HAVING thus acquainted you what the *lawful Things* are which I intended, I am in the next Place to aſſign the general Reaſon why we are concerned to exerciſe exceeding great Caution and Prudence about them, and that is this, becauſe Men *moſt frequently ſin* in the uſe of theſe lawful Things. Nothing is more common than to offend God and to ſcandalize our Brethren in the Enjoyment of theſe, though they are innocent in themſelves. *It may be*, ſaid that good Man above-mentioned, *that my Sons have ſinned, and curſed God in their Hearts*, Job. i. 5. As if he had ſaid, though I approved of their mutual Entertainments, as knowing

ing that Religion doth not condemn ſuch friendly Diverſions, yet I conſider this, that we all generally fail and offend in the uſe of Things lawful, even in the honeſt and neceſſary Things of this Life; inſtead of bleſſing God for them, we ſometimes may be ſaid to curſe him in our Hearts, to harbour irreverent Thoughts of him. Thus it was of old, as our Saviour teſtifies in *Luke* xvii. 27, 28. concerning the Perſons of the Antediluvian World and the People of *Sodom*, *They did eat, they drank, they married Wives, and they were given in Marriage, they bought, they ſold, they planted, they builded*, which are all of them very lawful Actions, and ſome of them neceſſary: But by the unlawful uſe of them they debauched their Minds and Conſciences, and forgot God and their Duty, and juſtly deriv'd the ſevereſt Judgments on themſelves. Afterwards we read that one of the Crimes laid to the *Jews*, was, that *their Land was full of Silver and Gold, neither is there any end of their Treaſures: Their Land is alſo full of Horſes, neither is there any end of their Chariots*, Iſai. ii. 7. The Meaning is, that they abuſed theſe Things which were in themſelves good and lawful: Their Pride, Oppreſſion, and Riot, were promoted by the undue uſe of theſe. So the *Jews* afterwards were blamed for *lying upon Beds of Ivory, and ſtretching themſelves on their Couches, and eating the Lambs out of the Flock, and the Calves out of the midſt of the Stall, and chanting to the Sound of the Viol, and inventing to themſelves Inſtruments of Muſick, and drinking Wine in Bowls, and anointing themſelves with the chief Ointments*, Amos vi. 4, 5. Not that any of theſe Things are in themſelves abſolutely ſinful, but that wanton People perverted the uſe of theſe lawful Things, and made them adminiſter to Luxury and Debauchery, and Contempt of God and Religion. So if we take Notice of the Excuſes which thoſe Perſons in the Parable made who were invited to the Marriage-Feaſt, we ſhall be convinc'd that even lawful Things may prove very dangerous to Mens Souls. One of the intended Gueſts could not come becauſe he had not tried his Oxen, another was hinder'd by a Purchaſe of Land that he had made, a third had married a Wife, and that was his Impediment. Though none of theſe Things were unlawful in their own Nature, yea, though they were very honeſt and lawful, and in ſome Caſe very neceſſary, yet they kept Men from coming to Chriſt, and were the Occaſion of the Ruin of their Souls. Thus it is, the greateſt Sins are committed in the uſe of indifferent and lawful Things, which relate to Buſineſs or Pleaſure. Theſe by Mens abuſing them become the Occaſions of the moſt heinous Vices and Enormities.

In the third and laſt Place I am to ſhew diſtinctly and particularly *how it comes to paſs* that the uſe of lawful Things becomes unlawful and ſinful. This is owing to ſuch Cauſes as theſe; *Firſt*, The Wiles of Satan, who is wont to mix himſelf with our lawful Enjoyments and Entertainments. The great Stratagem of the Enemy of our Souls is to entrap us by ſuch Ways. When our Table is plentifully prepar'd for us, he makes it a *Snare*; he conveys Poiſon into our Meats and Drink: And in all other Enjoyments he makes it his Buſineſs to render them ſome-ways hurtful and miſchievous to us. Our *own deprav'd Temper* is another Cauſe: For though theſe Things be good and lawful in themſelves, yet by reaſon of our evil Diſpoſitions and corrupt Inclinations they nouriſh Luſt in us, and are inſtrumental to the very ill Purpoſes. It is from our degenerare Nature that innocent Delights prove Impediments to Holineſs, and promote ſome of the worſt Vices. Another Spring of this Diſorder is our indulging of *Exceſs* in the uſe of theſe Things. The beſt and choiceſt of our Enjoyments, when abuſed by *Immoderation*, prove ſinful and noxious, as we ſee in Meats and Drinks, in Apparel, in Recreations, *&c.* Thus I have briefly ſhew'd *how* indifferent and lawful Things become unlawful, and are made to contribute to the greateſt Diſorders.

And now, is there not good Reaſon to urge the Caveat above-mention'd, that is, to be cautious in the uſe of lawful Things? And is it not a great Inſtance of *Prudence* and *wiſe Circumſpection* to be thus wary? That we may be ſo, let us obſerve this following Direction, namely, to deny ourſelves as to ſome Things lawful, which is, according to the Apoſtle's Practice, 1 *Cor.* x. 23. *All Things are lawful for me, but all Things are not expedient*, and therefore I refrain from doing them. And this was the Practice of the primitive Chriſtians, as *Minutius Felix* acquaints us, who * inſtances in ſome lawful and honeſt Pleaſures which they voluntarily abſtained from. And *Tertullian* before him had told as

* *Non Spectacula viſitis, non pompis intereſtis: convivia publica abſque vobis: Non corpus odoribus honeſtatis, reſervatis unguenta funeribus.*

* *Quantò facilius illicita timebet qui licita verebitur?* De cult. fœm.

much, and added this Reaſon *, He who is afraid of doing ſome Things that are lawful, will the more eaſily fear thoſe that are unlawful. And on the contrary, he that is reſolv'd to do every thing that is lawful for him to do, will ſoon ſlip into the Commiſſion of that which is unlawful. Here therefore the Advice is ſeaſonable, that we venture not on the fartheſt Bounds and utmoſt Extent of lawful Things, leſt we go beyond them unawares. It is not good to take our full Liberty in what we may, but it is ſafe to check and reſtrain ourſelves, and to confine ourſelves within Limits. If thus we walk warily in the uſe of lawful Things, they will not become hurtful to us or others, they will not be the Occaſions of Sin in ourſelves, or Scandal to our Brethren. Wherefore our Chriſtian *Wiſdom* and *Prudence* cannot be ſeen in a more illuſtrious Inſtance than this. I will add but one more, and that is this,

9thly and Laſtly, LET our ſpiritual Care and Wiſdom be ſeen in our not making ourſelves guilty of other Mens Sins. It is not enough that we do not actually commit Sin ourſelves, and in our own Perſons, but we muſt likewiſe be careful that we be not any ways inſtrumental in promoting Sin in others: For thereby we derive their Sin and Guilt upon us, and we are juſtly ſaid to be *Partakers with them*. Thus the Apoſtle having dehorted the *Epheſians* from the vitious Practice of ſeveral Sorts of Sinners, adds, *Be not Partakers with them*, Eph. v. 7. and Ver. 11. *Have no Fellowſhip with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs*. So he warns *Timothy* that he *be not Partaker of other Mens Sins*, by *laying his Hands ſuddenly on them*, that is, by admitting them to the Miniſtry without due Conſideration and Trial, 1 *Tim*. v. 22. We ſee then that there is ſuch a thing as a *Fellowſhip* and *Partaking* in the Sins of others, which I will explain in theſe following Particulars:

1. THIS is done by *adviſing* others to any ſinful Act. Thus *Achitophel*'s Council to *Abſalom* was to go in to his Father's Concubines, 2 *Sam*. xvi. 21. *Jonadab* adviſed his Friend *Ammon* to feign himſelf ſick, for the better contriving the raviſhing of his Siſter, 2 *Sam*. xiii. 5, *&c*. It is particularly recorded that *Caiaphas gave Council to the Jews* that Chriſt ſhould be put to Death, *John* xviii. 14. *Herodias* adviſed her Daughter to aſk of *Herod*, *John Baptiſt*'s Head, *Mark* vi. 24. And under this Head I may mention that *enticing* to Sin which the wiſe Man ſpeaks of in *Prov*. i. 10. and which is ſo common every where. It is uſual to inveigle others to the Commiſſion of Vice by ſetting before them the *Pleaſure* or *Profit* that attends it, as they are wont to repreſent it, and hereby they make themſelves guilty of thoſe evil Actions which they allure others to.

2. BY *commanding* and *compelling* others to Sin. Thus King *Saul* peremptorily commanded *Doeg* to fall upon the Lord's Prieſts and ſlay them, 1 *Sam*. xxii. 18. *David* gave poſitive Injunctions to *Abner* to procure the Death of *Uriah*. It is charged on *Jeroboam* that *he made all Iſrael to ſin*, namely, by forcing them to Idolatry, as he was a King and had Authority over them. *Jezabel*, in King *Ahab*'s Name, commanded that *Naboth* ſhould be falſly accuſed, and then ſtoned to Death, 1 *Kings* xxi. 7. A ſevere Proclamation came forth from *Nebuchadnezzar*, that all People ſhould fall down before the Image which he had ſet up, *Dan*. iii. 4. Thus Magiſtrates and Rulers are liable to the Guilt of other Mens Sins: So are Parents and Governours of Families, who by their Power and Authority fright and force thoſe that depend upon them unto unlawful Practices.

3. BY *provoking* others to Sin, we become Partakers of their Sin and Guilt. So *Job*'s Wife moved him to curſe God, *Job* ii. 9. It is left on Record concerning King *Ahab*, who *ſold himſelf to work Wickedneſs*, that *Jezabel his Wife ſtirred him up*, 1 Kings xxi. 25. And this is no unuſual thing in the Practice of the Men of this World; they excite and ſtir up others to Lewdneſs and Drunkenneſs, to Quarrels and Contentions, and other Enormities, and thereby become guilty of thoſe very Crimes, though they do not act them themſelves. Therefore Parents are commanded *not to provoke their Children to Wrath*, Eph. vi. 4. And all other Perſons, by virtue of the ſame Prohibition, are forbid to exaſperate and excite any of thoſe they converſe with, to that which is unlawful.

4. BY Connivance and Silence, by not reproving of Sin, or by faintly reproving it, we become acceſſary to other Mens Faults, and bring the Guilt of them on our own Heads. This was *Eli*'s Miſcarriage, as we find it taken Notice of in 1 *Sam*. ii. 23. His ſoft Language to his Sons was this, *Why do ye ſuch Things? Nay, my Sons, for 'tis no good Report that I hear*. They might think it was no

coſinconſiderable Crime they were charged with, when they heard it reproved ſo coldly. It is further added in Chap. iii. Ver. 13. *His ſons made themſelves vile, and he reſtrained them not*, or, according to the *Hebrew*, *he frowned not upon them*; but it may be rather ſmil'd and look'd pleaſantly on them when he mentioned their Miſcarriages to them. But he ſhould have rebuked them with great Freedom and Boldneſs, with Sharpneſs and Severity, and have let them ſee that he abhorred their Behaviour, and would not ſuffer them to perſiſt in it. He acting otherwiſe, did plainly encourage and countenance Sin in his Children; and ſo do all thoſe that neglect to reprove Vice in others, or diſcharge this Office ſlightly and ſuperficially. Eſpecially Miniſters, who are to *cry aloud and ſpare not*, are obnoxious here. Likewiſe Parents and Rulers of Families muſt be plain and impartial in their Reproofs, and not permit thoſe under their Charge to go on in their vitious Courſes without check. Yea, if they uſe not due Correction and Chaſtiſement, they thereby favour and cheriſh their Faults, and ſo become faulty themſelves. The ſame may be juſtly ſaid of Magiſtrates and publick Officers of Juſtice, by not puniſhing Offenders according to their Merits, they partake of their Offences.

5. THIS Men commonly do by *conſenting to* and *approving* of other Mens Sins. Thus *Saul was conſenting unto Stephens's death*, Acts viii. 1. which he acknowledg'd afterwards himſelf, *Acts* xxii. 20. *When the blood of thy martyr Stephen was ſhed, I alſo was ſtanding by and conſenting unto his death*, and conſequently he takes upon himſelf Part of the Guilt of that Murder. So St. *John*, ſpeaking of the wilful Oppoſers of the chriſtian Doctrine, tells us, that *he who biddeth ſuch a perſon God-ſpeed*, (that is, he that favours him and wiſhes him Succeſs) *is partaker of his evil deeds*, 2d Epiſt. Ver. 11. Thus if the Actions of the Intemperate and Luxurious, of the Lewd and Unchaſt, of the Proud and Inſolent, of the Diſhoneſt and * Injurious, of the Bloody and Violent, or of any other Criminals, are pleaſing to us, they are all ours. We make them ſo by our approving and liking them, yea we make them ſo by delighting in the naming and rehearſing of them. And they are juſtly reputed ours, becauſe we would have acted them if we had been in their Circumſtances, or becauſe we wiſh we could have acted them in Circumſtances not hurtful to us. And this and what I have ſaid before gives ſome Account of the reaſonableneſs of the Eternity of Hell-Torments: Men burn in Hell for all the Sins and Enormities committed in the World by others from the Beginning to their very Time, for by after-conſent they make all theſe their own Sins. This we learn from what our Saviour hath delivered concerning the *Jews* who perſecuted him and ſought his Blood; he lets them know, that the Blood of all the Prophets which was ſhed from the Foundation of the World, ſhall be required of that Generation, *Luke* xi. 50. namely, becauſe they had made all that Bloodſhed their own by their approving and liking it, and acting in the like manner themſelves.

* Διαφέρει γὰρ τοῦ ἀδικεῖν οὐδὲν τὸ συνεπιγράφεσθαι ἀδικοῦντι. Philo de Leg. Specialib.

6. BY our *excuſing* and *defending* others Mens Sins, which is called *juſtifying the Wicked*, and is oppos'd to *condemning the Juſt*, Prov. xvii. 15. we take the demerit of them on ourſelves. This is done by all thoſe that ſpeak or write in vindication of falſe and pernicious Doctrines, or ſuch Actions as are unlawful. This is done by thoſe Counſellors and Advocates who plead in a bad Cauſe, and diſpute and argue againſt Right and Juſtice. This is done by all thoſe who aſſert and maintain thoſe Propoſitions, or thoſe Practices which they know ought to be condemned.

7. BY our *evil Examples* we involve ourſelves in the Guilt of others. This chiefly concerns thoſe in Place and Authority, Magiſtrates and ſpiritual Guides, and Governors of Families, whoſe Actions are wont to be imitated by thoſe that are under them. Wherefore the Influence of this Example is of very great Importance, and if it be vitious, it generally draws others into the practice of what is ſo.

8. BY *diſheartning* and *diſcouraging* others in the Way of Virtue, whether it be by laying Obſtacles in their way, or by frighting them from their Duty, or by reproaching them for their Weakneſſes and Failings, or by laughing and ſcoffing at Goodneſs and Holineſs, and Strictneſs of Life, we make ourſelves Partakers of their Sins, and their Faults and Miſcarriages are deſervedly imputed to us. Here therefore let us exert our chriſtian *Care* and *Wiſdom* by avoiding thoſe ways

whereby we become thus Miſchievous to our Brethren, and even to our own Souls, by making ourſelves guilty as well as them.

THUS you are to walk *not as Fools but as Wiſe*, you are to act not only with regard to the All-ſeeing Eye of Heaven, and with reſpect to yourſelves alſo and your own Conſciences, but you are to remember that your Actions are taken Notice of by the World: You have many Spectators who throughly ſcan all that you do. Whether you obſerve it or not, there are many Eyes upon you. Some mind your Behaviour to find Fault, and feed their envious Humour, to aggravate your Failings, to repreſent them worſer than they are, and to report them to your great Diſadvantage. There are a Sort of Men who will not work by your Light which ſhines before them, but they will cry out aloud when they ſee your Light decays, and is near Extinction. *Others* narrowly view your Actions, and eye and obſerve all you do, to imitate you. They think what you act is Juſtifiable, and by your Example and Conduct they intend to ſteer their Courſe.

YOU ſee then how reaſonable and neceſſary it is that you look to your Words and Actions, and that you ſo demean yourſelves that no Occaſion of Scandal may be given to the Obſervers of either Sort. Act nothing that may debaſe your high Calling. Follow the Apoſtle's Injunction in *Rom.* xiii. 12. *Caſt off the works of darkneſs, and put on the armour of light: walk honeſtly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenneſs,* &c. Perſons put on a better Habit and Garb in the Day-time, when they are to go abroad, than they wear at Night. To this uſage the Apoſtle alludes. Chriſtians are to converſe in the *World*; they have Occaſion to be ſeen *abroad*, and to be taken Notioe of: Therefore they are concerned to keep a decency and comlineſs in all their Actions. Saints and righteous Souls are ſaid to be *clothed in white Raiment*: A Spot will ſoon be ſeen in that.

THE witty Father *Tertullian* was pleaſed to ſtile the Chriſtians of his Time *Funambulones*, i. e. in plain *Engliſh*, Dancers on the Ropes, and that for this Reaſon, becauſe they ought to *walk Exactly and Circumſpectly*. If they chance to tread awry, and ſtep never ſo little aſide, it is ſoon diſcovered by the Spectators, and the Goſpel of Chriſt Jeſus is diſcredited; beſides that, the Effects of it are otherwiſe very dangerous. An *Enemy* and an *Obſerver* are ſynonimous Terms in the holy Language, the * ſame Word ſerves for both. But our Enemies (I mean thoſe who are the Adverſaries alſo of Virtue and Goodneſs) may prove our good Friends in this, that by their obſerving of our Actions they may put us upon looking more narrowly into our Lives, and ſtudying to be Exact and Circumſpect. *Plutarch* ſaith excellently to this purpoſe, that *when we Sin* † *we ſtand in awe more of our Enemies than our profeſs'd Friends.*

THINK of it often that there are many who pry into your Manners; and though they never take care of their own Lives, yet they are very obſervant of yours. A *ſpotted Beaſt* is very *quick of Sight*, even to a Proverb. Men of polluted and foul Lives are moſt ready to take Notice of the Miſcarriages of thoſe who pretend to Godlineſs. Remember this then that you dwell among ſuch whoſe Eyes are always upon you to mark your Failings, and whoſe Tongues are in readineſs to proclaim them. If there be a *Spot* in the *Belt of Jupiter*, you ſhall find it diſcovered preſently, and taken Notice of by a *Tranſactor in Philoſophy*; nay, though really there was no ſuch thing, as it appeared afterwards in print. If there be any thing amiſs, or ſeems to be ſo in the Lives of thoſe who are ſuppoſed to move in a higher Sphere than the reſt of the World, who profeſs to be Heavenly and God-like, the failing ſhall not long lie hid, but ſhall be drawn forth into publick View, and be made the Spot and Blemiſh of Piety itſelf.

THE *Application* of all ſhall be in theſe two Particulars; 1. Be deterr'd from all Appearance of Wickedneſs and Vice. 2. Be encouraged to a holy and godly Life. Think you have Reaſon to be deterr'd from all manner of vitious Practices on this double Conſideration; 1. Leſt the Ways of God be evil ſpoken of, and conſequently that God himſelf be diſhonoured thereby. 2. Leſt others be drawn to imitate your ill Example.

Firſt, I SAY, count it your *Wiſdom* to ſhun all wicked Practices, leſt God and his Ways be Diſhonoured and Blaſphemed. When *David*'s Adultery is mentioned in the ſecond Book of *Samuel*, this is added by the Holy Spirit, *By this deed he had given great occaſion to the enemies of the Lord to blaſpheme*, ch. xii. ver. 14. The heathen *Amorites* and prophane *Iſraelites* opened their Mouths againſt God when this came to their Ears. The forethought Conſideration of ſuch an Event as this, ſhould have put a check to *David*'s inordinate Luſt. And the ſame ſhould prevail with us to refrain from Sin, eſpecially from all notorious Crimes, that the Name of God may not ſuffer by our ſcandalous Behaviour. Let us think of this, that when we do any thing baſe and unworthy, we diſcredit our Religion, we defame our Profeſſion, and thereby God himſelf. I beſeech you remember what I have already told you, that your beſt Actions are maliciouſly miſconſtrued by the obſerving World, and then be ſure your worſt cannot eſcape their Cenſures. Who ſees not that theſe buſy Spirits, when they behold your groſſer Failings and Miſcarriages, condemn even all Religion and Holineſs for your ſakes, and repreſent Chriſtianity itſelf as Criminal and Scandalous. Let this Conſideration then, among others, prevail with you to be wary and wiſe in your Carriage, that Chriſtianity itſelf may not ſuffer by your Diſorders. Give no Occaſion to evil and malicious Tongues, but utterly ſtifle and ſilence them by doing ſuch Things as are of good Report, and become the Goſpel of Chriſt.

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* *Shur.*

† Τοῦτο τῆς κακίας ἴδιόν ἐςι, τὸ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἀισχύνεσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦς φίλους.

The ſecond Conſideration is this, you are to live uprightly, and to avoid all known Sin, leſt others imitate your bad Example, and be involved in the ſame guilt with yourſelves. You have heard (and I ſuppoſe you are daily apprehenſive of it) that there are thoſe who obſerve what you do, and perſwade themſelves that it will be no Fault to follow your Steps, eſpecially if you be ſet in any eminent Place, and are the Guides and Overſeers of others. Your Children, your Servants, and whoſoever they are that are under your Care and Tuition, take Notice of your Actions, and hold themſelves obliged to do as you do. So that you propagate Vice by your evil Example, and you give Authority to Sin by your Commiſſion of it. This ought ſeriouſly to poſſeſs your Thoughts, and put you effectually upon doing what is Good and Laudable, leſt you be guilty of other Mens Sins, and your Brethrens Faults be laid to your Charge.

It is a notorious Brand upon *Jeroboam* that *he made Iſrael to Sin*. Even in After-ages, when he was laid in his Grave and ſlept with his Fathers, he was ſtigmatiz'd with this Character. This is ſaid to his eternal Shame, that Wickedneſs and Idolatry were propagated, and in a manner perpetuated by the influence of ſo powerful an Example. Thus Sins live and ſurvive, although the Sinners be dead. Though we repent and heartily forſake our Sin, yet the Infection of our former ill Behaviour may ſpread itſelf many Years, if not Ages afterwards. This ſhould induce us to be very careful how we act, this ſhould make us abſtain from thoſe things which will yield matter of ill Example to others. If thoſe that in a more ſignal manner profeſs Chriſtianity, and make a ſhew of Holineſs, walk contrary to the Laws of Chriſt, and are ſeen to be guilty of ſcandalous Sins, ſurely, ſay the Men of the World, we may be well excuſed if we do the like, for we never pretended to ſo much Preciſeneſs, and we have no ſuch Obligations upon us to a holy Life as they have. Be ſo *wiſe* then as to give no Occaſion to theſe Men to talk after this rate.

In the next place, be encouraged to a godly and virtuous Life. For, *firſt*, hereby you may ſhame and diſcountenance Vice, and cauſe it to be ſomewhat modeſt: You may make it retreat, at leaſt not appear ſo publickly and openly in the World as it doth. *Secondly*, You may bring Credit and Honour to the chriſtian Religion, and make it well ſpoken of even by thoſe who have no cordial Love for it. *Thirdly*, You may happily win theſe Perſons to you, and bring them over to the entire Approving of ſo holy an Inſtitution. An exact and ſtrict Converſation hath a ſtrange magnetick Power in it, and is able oftentimes to draw Men into its Embraces. True inward Goodneſs and the viſible exerting of it before Men have a mighty Influence. What is it that they are not able to effect? The learned *Philo* hath this Paſſage,* "As it is profitable (ſaith he) to be "really Good and Honeſt, ſo it is likewiſe to appear to be ſo." *Truth* indeed is better than *Opinion*, yet *both* together are very Proſperous and Auſpicious. Let us therefore be mindful to join both theſe.

Laſtly,

* Ὥσπερ τὸ ἀγαθὸν εἶναι καὶ καλὸν, οὕτω καὶ τὸ δοκεῖν εἶναι λυσιτελές· καὶ ἀμείνων μὲν δόξης ἀλήθεια· εὔδαιμον δὲ τὸ ἐξ ἀμφοῖν. De Migrat. Abrah.

Laſtly, SAY that you cannot prevail upon the wicked World, yet know this, that by means of your exemplary Lives the Great God of Heaven and Earth ſhall be Glorified, and that even by the Mouths of theſe impenitent and graceleſs Wretches. This is the Senſe of the Apoſtle St. *Peter*, in his 1ſt Epiſt. Chap. ii. Ver. 12. where he beſeeches the Chriſtians to *have their converſation honeſt among the Gentiles*, and backs it with this Motive, that *whereas they ſpeak againſt you as evil doers, they may by your good works which they ſhall behold, glorify God in the day of viſitation.* Now they Mock and Scoff at all Virtue and Goodneſs, and render (as much as in them lieth) all Religion Vain and Ridiculous: but the Day is coming, the great and terrible Day of the Lord, when theſe prophane Scoffers ſhall change their Sentiments, and be wholly of another Perſwaſion. They ſhall be convinced then (though too late) that Godlineſs is the greateſt Gain, that Righteouſneſs is the moſt approved Policy, and that Religion is the higheſt Wiſdom. They ſhall commend and applaud the Perſons whom they once vilified, they ſhall honour and reverence the Profeſſion which they before diſgraced and perſecuted: In brief, they ſhall in the great and final Day of Viſitation, by their voluntary Confeſſion and Acknowledgments, openly Vouch that Cauſe which they once Traduced, and Glorify that Name which they heretofore Blaſphemed.

A DISCOURSE OF THE Redeeming and Improving of Time.

EPH. V. 16.

Redeeming the Time.

HAVING treated of the grand and leading Duty in the Text, *walking circumſpectly*, and the firſt Inſtance of that Chriſtian Circumſpection, *viz.* walking *not as Fools, but as Wiſe*: I proceed now to the ſecond Inſtance of the main Duty, and that is *Redeeming the Time.* And here I will undertake theſe Four Things.

I. To ſhew in General what it is to *redeem the Time.*

II. To ſet before you the particular *manner* of redeeming the Time.

III. To offer you the *Reaſons* of it. (And as to that particular Reaſon or Motive adjoin'd here by the Apoſtle, I will treat of that by itſelf, when I have diſpatch'd this part of my Diſcourſes on the Words.)

IV. I WILL preſent you with thoſe practical *Inferences* which this Doctrine affords.

I. THE firſt Thing I undertake is, to give you a more general Account of this Apoſtolical Injunction, and to acquaint you what it is to *redeem the Time.* The * *Greek* Word here uſed for *redeeming*, hath two uſual Significations. Firſt, it is ſometimes no more than ἀγοράζειν, barely to *buy* or *purchaſe*; and accordingly, *redimere* among the *Latins* is frequently taken for *emere.* The Metaphor then in the Text is borrow'd from the common Employ of Merchants and Tradeſmen, who when they meet with Wares and Commodities which are proper for their turn, ſuffer them not to paſs out of their Hands, but are careful to lay hold on the preſent offer, and to *buy them* up. And when I have told you that to *buy*, in the proper import of the Word, is to obtain or purchaſe one Thing by another as an equitable Price or Conſideration for it; you may eaſily underſtand what it is to *buy*, or (as it is here tranſlated) to *redeem the Time.* This *buying* is no other than this, to be very ſollicitous to ſecure all the Seaſons and Opportunities that come into our Hands, to lay hold on every Occaſion that preſents itſelf to us, and to improve it to the beſt and moſt conſiderable Purpoſes, *viz.* the Welfare of our immortal Souls, and the Honour of our Creator. And, to make this Purchaſe

* ἐξαγοράζεσθαι.

chaſe and Improvement, we muſt be at ſome *Charges*, we muſt be content to lay down a *Price:* That is, we muſt with great Pains and Care, with a mighty Diligence and Induſtry make ourſelves Poſſeſſors of ſo rich and valuable a Treaſure. It will be neceſſary to uſe our utmoſt Endeavours, to exerciſe all our Skill and Art, and to make uſe of all the beſt and moſt proper Means in order to this excellent End and Purpoſe.

AND as the Wiſe Man adviſed concerning *Truth*, ſo may I of *Time*, *Buy it, but ſell it not*. When you are Maſters of ſome happy Opportunities, let no Man gain them out of your Hands. Be not perſwaded by any means to put your Time to ſale. What you have bought, and perhaps with no ſmall coſt, be not prevail'd with to part with: But know that it is your Intereſt to keep it charily, and to uſe it with the greateſt Wiſdom and Prudence; this is *buying* or *purchaſing the Time*.

AND before I leave this Particular, let me adjoin this, that ſome Criticks have thought that this Phraſe in the Text is an Alluſion or Reference to that Paſſage in *Dan.* ii. 8. where it is ſaid that the *Chaldeans* or *Soothſayers*, who could not tell the King his Dream which he had forgot, and therefore were afraid they ſhould ſuffer for it, would *gain or buy the Time*; i. e. they endeavour'd to act as wiſely as they could, in thoſe ill Circumſtances they were in; they labour'd by protracting the Time, or otherwiſe, to extricate themſelves from the great Danger they were involv'd in; and this manner of ſpeaking hath grown by Degrees (ſaith the learned *Hammond*) into a proverbial Speech, and is to be met with in other good Writers. And this *Gaining*, *Buying*, or *Redeeming* of Time, ſignifies to be wiſe in *watching for Opportunities*, to be *skilful in improving of Seaſons*, and to be dextrous in avoiding thoſe Dangers which are threatened by evil Times. It ſeems to be the very ſame with what the Son of *Sirach* adviſes us to, *Obſerve the Opportunity, and beware of Evil*, Eccluſ. iv. 20.

WHICH ſeems to be included in the Words of the Text, as is clear from the Motive which follows, *Becauſe the Days are Evil*. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, ſeeing the World hates you, and ſeeing a good Life and upright Walking render you obnoxious, I exhort you to keep your Innocence, and to hold faſt your Integrity; but withal, behave yourſelves prudently and cautiouſly; endeavour to underſtand the Times, and to foreſee the Evils that are coming, and endeavour by all honeſt and lawful Means to eſcape the Danger.

AND thus it agrees alſo with what immediately goes before this Clauſe of the Text, and it may be reckon'd as an *Inſtance* of Chriſtian *Prudence* and *Diſcretion*; for the Apoſtle bids them behave themſelves *not as Fools, but as Wiſe*. There cannot be a greater Act of *ſpiritual Wiſdom* than rightly to *Gain the Time*, to guard ourſelves (as much as in us lies) from the *Perils*, and alſo to diſcharge the *Duties* which are proper to the particular Seaſons we meet with; to manage and improve all Opportunities to the beſt Advantages, eſpecially to that of a Holy Life here, and a Bleſſed Immortality hereafter.

Secondly, As the Word ἐξαγοράζεσθαι ſignifies barely to *buy*, ſo likewiſe to *buy ſomething back again*, to recover and retrieve that which was formerly parted with; and this is properly to *Redeem*: Whence we may ſee the fitneſs and excellency of the Metaphor here made uſe of by the Apoſtle. He ſuppoſes that the Perſons he writ to, had formerly ſpent their Time to bad Purpoſes; that they had imbezell'd and ſquander'd away many of the precious Seaſons which were put into their Hands, and therefore he exhorts them to *buy back again* the loſt Time, to *Regain* and *Recover* for the future what they had ſo fooliſhly parted with. As he enjoin'd them, according to the firſt Import of this Expreſſion, to purchaſe and ſecure Time by an early and fore-hand Care, ſo now he charges them to retrieve what is paſt by an after-hand Diligence, and a more than ordinary Care for the Time to come. He would have them look back and reflect on their former miſpending their Time, and from thence be admoniſhed to be more diligent and careful, more active and vigorous in the diſcharge of their Duty, in the enſuing part of their Lives.

YOU ſee then what it is to *Redeem the Time*; you muſt remember how laviſh you have been of it already, and thereby learn to employ it better for the future. How great Portions of your Time have been paſt in Idleneſs and Vanity? What a great ſhare of it is gone in Impertinences and Follies? How many Days, nay, Years have been thrown away in purſuit of the World, in the gratifying of luſtful Deſires, in the Pleaſures of Sin, and in minding nothing but indulging of the carnal Appetite? Nay, How great a Number of Years have ſome of you ſpent in an open Oppoſition to all that is Good and Holy, in a reviling of the ways of Righteouſneſs, in a ſcoffing at Religion and a ſtrict Life, in a conſtant offending of God, and violating your own Conſciences by all manner of Prophaneneſs and Debauchery? It is now high Time (if it be not too late) to bethink yourſelves, and to reflect ſeriouſly on the precious Time you have waſted, and with hearty Sorrow and Regret to turn unto God, and to dedicate All the remaining part of your Life to the Service of Him, whom you have ſo long and ſo unworthily diſregarded. It concerns thoſe eſpecially, who after their times of Ignorance and Forgetfulneſs of God, have attain'd to any Senſe of the true Virtue and Power of Chriſtianity, to *know the Time*, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *viz.* that *Now it is high-time* (or more exactly according to the *Greek*, it is the very *Hour*, the juſt and ſet particular Time) *for them to awake out of Sleep*, Rom. xiii. 11. They muſt make uſe of their former Failings, as ſo many Arguments and Inducements to a ſtricter walking before God.

The Connexion therefore of my Text is very obſervable on this Account. Immediately upon the Apoſtle's telling the *Epheſians* that *they were ſometimes Darkneſs*, upon his intimating to them how they had formerly been Partakers with the moſt wicked and profligate Perſons; he adds, by way of rational Inference, *See then that ye walk circumſpectly, not as Fools but as Wiſe; Redeeming the Time.* From the Conſideration of their former Folly and heatheniſh Life, he exhorts them, as from a ſufficient Motive, now to behave themſelves with an extraordinary Exactneſs. *They muſt no longer live the reſt of their Time in the Fleſh, to the Luſts of Men, but to the Will of God: For the Time paſt of their Life muſt ſuffice them to have wrought the Will* of thoſe who are unmindful of God, and of their Duty. To ſin once and again is Folly, but to perſiſt in Sin, after we are convinc'd of it, and are brought to a clear Knowledge of our Duty, is the greateſt Madneſs imaginable, and cannot any way be excuſed.

Those of you therefore, who have in the former part of your Lives offended God, and debauch'd your Conſciences, and walk'd contrary to the divine Laws, as well as to your own Intereſt, be ſenſible of theſe your Miſcarriages, and do ſo no more. And the more you find you have miſemploy'd your Time, with the greater ſtrictneſs and caution you ought to manage it in the following part of your Life. *This is carrying double Money in your Sacks* (if I may ſo ſpeak) when you are reſolv'd to *buy and redeem Time.* You muſt uſe more than ordinary Care and Sedulity, and a *ſingular* and *unuſual Expedition*, when you ſet yourſelves about this Work. You muſt conſider what you *have been*, you muſt reflect on your *paſt Life*, and by *that* you will be induc'd (God's Grace aſſiſting you) to mind the Future more ſeriouſly. Think how many Days, yea, how many Years have been ſpent in Folly and Vanity; or, which is worſe, in a defiance of all that is Holy, and Juſt, and Upright. Think how ſhamefully you have diſhonour'd God, by miſpending thoſe Talents which he entruſted you with, and then ſurely you will retire into your own Hearts, and there reſolve to be more careful of your Duty for the *Time to come*: Then you will quit all Sloth and Idleneſs, *and abound in the Work of the Lord*, and labour above the common rate of Chriſtians, and make your future Endeavours proportionable to your former Miſcarriages; imitating that true Penitent, who as he denied his Maſter thrice, ſo anſwerably thereunto, he made a threefold Confeſſion and Acknowledgment of him afterwards. If you would truly and faithfully *Redeem the Time*, you muſt perſwade your ſelves of this, that your paſt Failings ought to have an influence on your Future Converſation.

You muſt by virtue of this Duty, the *Redemption of Time*, be more eſpecially Religious and Holy in thoſe Things wherein you formerly moſt offended; you muſt mind thoſe Graces chiefly, which heretofore you moſt neglected. If you indulg'd your ſelves in Luxury and Intemperance, now ſee that you in a ſpecial manner follow Sobriety and Moderation. If Uncleanneſs and Laſciviouſneſs was your Crime, know, that hereafter you are more particularly concern'd to be chaſte and continent. If you were guilty of Injuſtice, Fraud and Oppreſſion, now let it be your Care, in a more ſignal Way, to ſhew your ſelves Juſt and

Merciful in all your dealings with Men. And in whatever other way you have been faulty, be mindful to follow the contrary Graces and Actions, by exerciſing your ſelves in Duties of an oppoſite Nature in the whole ſequel of your Lives. This is the beſt and only Way to retrieve and regain the Time you have loſt already. The right Expedient is to ſtudy God's Glory, and to mind your own Happineſs more concernedly and zealouſly for the future. And thus much ſhall ſuffice to be ſpoken of the *general Nature* of this Duty.

II. I AM to propound to you the *particular manner* of Redeeming the Time; and this cannot be ſaid in fewer and more comprehenſive Words than theſe, that we take care to *ſpend every Day well*; and if you ask me how this is to be done, I anſwer, it may moſt effectually be done theſe three Ways. Iſt. By *beginning* every Day well. IIdly. By *proceeding* in it accordingly. And, IIIdly. By *concluding* it in a like manner.

I KNOW I ſpeak at this Time to a mixt Aſſembly, to Perſons of different Qualities as well as Sexes; to thoſe whoſe Profeſſions and Employments are various; to the Illiterate, and to thoſe who addict themſelves to Study and Learning: But I hope the Directions and Rules which I ſhall offer, will be ſuitable to ſome of every Rank and Condition. I ſhall ſo frame my Diſcourſe, that every one of them may carry Home ſomething that will be uſeful and ſerviceable to his proper State and Circumſtances.

Firſt, SPEND every Day well by *beginning it well*; and here indeed muſt be our firſt and chief Care; for if our Entrance be amiſs, it is too likely that our Progreſs will be ſo to. That you may then *begin* the Day well, bear in your Minds theſe two Rules. Iſt. Let not Sleep rob you of the firſt and beſt Portion of your Time. IIdly. Dedicate your early Hours to Religion.

My firſt Advice is, that you would not ſuffer immoderate Sleep to rob you of the firſt and choiceſt part of the Day. That Reſolution and Purpoſe of the Holy Pſalmiſt may be our Pattern, *I my ſelf will awake early*, Pſal. cviii. 2. or according to the Original, which is very Poetical, *I will call up the Morning*; I will check the tardy Sun for not coming its Round faſt enough; I impatiently wait for its early Dawn, and I think it very long before it appears and brings me Tidings of the approaching Day. I read that the Sagicious *Apollonius* being early at *Veſpatian*'s Gate, and finding him ſtirring, from thence conjectur'd that he was a Perſon worthy to govern. It is certain, that the prudent cutting off the Superfluities of your Sleep is an excellent Advantage to the well ordering and governing of humane Life.

BUT I ſpeak not this, as if every one was bound to quit his Repoſe preciſely when the Sun riſeth, or elſe he muſt not be thought to be of the Number of thoſe who *Redeem the Time*: No, I call to mind a Paſſage to this Purpoſe of *Coſmus de Medicis*, the famous Duke of *Florence*, who, when a Courtier once ruſhed in upon him, and took him *in Bed late* in the Morning, and began to mention *that* to him, and to inform him, that *he himſelf* had been up *betimes* and had been Abroad, and diſpatched a great deal of Buſineſs; the Duke reply'd to him in theſe Words, Boaſt not your Diligence, Sir, my very Repoſe is more profitable to the Common-wealth than all your early and induſtrious Riſing. When ſerious and uſeful Thoughts, and weighty Conſideration, and meditating on the beſt Things, (which require Privacy and Retirement) are the Employment of our Minds, we entertain the Time well, and may well be excuſed for our not leaving our Places of Reſt. And then again, what I ſay under this Head muſt be underſtood aright, with reference to thoſe that are of infirm and weak Bodies, or are aged Perſons; great Allowances of Reſt and Sleep muſt be granted to ſuch, and much muſt be allowed to the Tempers and Conſtitutions of Perſons; and the Callings and Employments of Perſons muſt be conſider'd in this Affair, ſo that there are no certain Rules and Directions here to be ſet down.

BUT it is the ſlothful and drowſy, the ſoft and effeminate Diſpoſition which my Diſcourſe is level'd againſt at preſent. This is infamous even in the very Hiſtory of the Pagans. For this the *Sybarites* were ſtigmatiz'd of Old, who (as *Atheneus* and others relate) would not ſuffer any Trades among them that made a noiſe; nay, not ſo much as a Cock to crow in their Cities, that they might not be *waken'd* by them. If you would *Redeem the Time*, you ought to be careful that Sleep (that * unmerciful Exactor of Time, if it be too much indulg'd) do not demand too great a ſhare of your Life. *Sleep* ought to be *neceſſary* and *healthful*; but if it be *immoderate*, it can be neither. Sleep is for the refreſhing of the frail Body, and to render us more fit to ſerve God in all the Employments of our Life; but, if it be exceſſive, and devours too much Time, it will not be uſeful for that Purpoſe.

* Atrociſſimus vitæ humanæ publicanus. *Sen.*

Secondly, HAVING redeem'd the Morning from Sleep, dedicate it to God and Religion. We read in *Exod.* xxxii. 6. that the *Jews roſe betimes in the Morning* to worſhip the Golden Calf. Shall idolatrous Worſhippers devote the choiceſt part of the Day to ſo evil Purpoſes, and ſhall not the Votaries of the true Religion dedicate the ſame to the only God and his Service? If the firſt time of the Day be a Friend to the Muſes, (as is uſually ſaid) to the ſtudy of good Letters and humane Learning, it muſt be more ſo to Holy Meditation, Prayer, and all Exerciſes of Devotion, and it may deſervedly be conſecrated to theſe. Give then the Firſt-fruits of every Day to God. As it ſhould be a Chriſtian's firſt Buſineſs in his Years, and greater portions of Time, and in his whole Life, ſo he muſt make it his firſt Care *every Day* of his Life to dedicate his Time to Religion. Firſt, He muſt open the Day with Prayer: *My Voice ſhalt thou hear in the Morning, O Lord! in the Morning will I direct my Prayer unto thee, and will look up*, Pſal. v. 3. It is no unprofitable Criticiſm, that the *Hebrew* Word *Bakar* ſignifies to *ſeek God by Prayer*, and *Boker* of the ſame Original, ſignifies the *Morning*; and ſo likewiſe the *Hebrew* Word *Shachar* is to *Seek*, and *Shachar* is alſo *Aurora*, *Diluculum*, the *Morning*. Seeking or Prayer is proper for the Morning: Some think the Title of the Twenty Second Pſalm refers to this; good Hebritians and Expoſitors interpret *Ajileth Shachar*, the *Strength of the Morning*, i. e. the Break of Day; and ſo they conceive that this Pſalm was dedicated to the Prieſts and *Levites*, to be ſung in the Temple every Morning when the Day began to appear; and, ſuch an Order for the Divine Service you read in 1 *Chron.* xxiii. 30. Remember this, that the *Morning* is the *Seeking-time*, therefore never fail to ſeek God's Face by Prayer at that Seaſon. After an humble Confeſſion of thy Sins which thou haſt been guilty of, beg of the God of thy Life, that he would graciouſly pardon them for the Merits of Chriſt Jeſus, thy alone Saviour and Redeemer, and that he would be pleas'd to ſanctify thee in Body, Soul and Spirit; that he would conduct thee every Day into the Paths of Righteouſneſs, and at laſt lead thee into endleſs Glory. Beſides devout *Supplication* and *Petition*, there is another part of Prayer which we muſt begin the Day with, namely, *Praiſe* and *Thankſgiving*. This Morning Sacrifice is conſtantly to be offer'd up by every ſincere Votary of Chriſtianity. Admire and Laud the Divine Goodneſs for preſerving thee from the Dangers of the Darkneſs which is paſt; extoll the Mercies of God for lengthning out thy Life, and for vouchſafing thee a farther Opportunity of Repentance.

TO Prayer, add *Meditation* and *ſerious Reflections*; hanſel every Morning with *pious Thoughts* of God and his Ways; remember thy Creator in that part of the Day, which is the *Youth* of it. Commit thy ſelf and all thy Concerns to God; fully reſolve to be guided and diſpoſed by him in the enſuing Day, and thro' the whole Courſe of thy Life.

THUS *begin* every Day, not as thoſe who ſuffer this firſt and moſt precious Part of their Time to be ſpent wholly in Idleneſs or in fooliſh Buſineſs, or in lewd and wicked Enterprizes, or in the Things which only adminiſter to Vanity. The covetous Man bids his *Mammon* firſt Good-morrow. The Wanton and Luxurious are ſaluted firſt of all with the Thoughts of their Pleaſures; and ſo of all ranks of Sinners, you may conclude, that their particular and peculiar Vices are their firſt Entertainment as ſoon as they awake, and the whole Day or a great part of it, is accordingly waſted in purſuit of them: But Pride generally is the greateſt Devourer of the Morning, I mean, among thoſe who have more regard for their Bodies than their Souls, who are more deſirous to be reckon'd Beautiful than Virtuous; who would rather be Fair than Good; who value their Dreſs before their Religion; [who forget that the *Looking-Glaſſes* of the *Iſraelitiſh* Women were devoted by them to the *Tabernacle*, to tell that Sex, that the care of adorning and decking the Body muſt give way to a more important Intereſt, *viz* the ſerving of God, and the looking after their immortal Souls.] But let it be remembred by all thoſe who profeſs Chriſtianity, that true Grace is the moſt comely Ornament; and to laviſh much of their Time (eſpecially the choiceſt Part of it) in adorning and decking, trimming and ſetting forth of their Bodies, is unworthy of their Profeſſion, and an Employment unſeemly for thoſe who are call'd upon to *Redeem the Time*.

IN the next place, (Having *begun* the Day well) be mindful to *proceed* in it accordingly. As you begun with God, ſo continue with him, and dedicate the whole Day to his Glory. To which purpoſe let me offer to you theſe Directions. Iſt. Make Religion your great Buſineſs, and give Proofs of this, by ſetting apart *ſome particular Times* for the Exerciſes of Religion, and the Concernment of your Souls; for Reading, Meditating, Praying, Self-examination, and fitting your ſelves for Death and Judgment; and let not worldly Buſineſs incroach upon thoſe Seaſons which you ſet apart for thoſe Holy Purpoſes. In a more eſpecial manner, when the Lord's-day, or Chriſtian Sabbath returns, ſee that you religiouſly obſerve it, and with a great and ſingular Devotion employ this Day. If you would be bleſſed in the *remaining part* of the Week, be conſcious in the keeping of the *Firſt-day* of it a-right. Improve *that Time* well, which by *God himſelf* is hallowed, and ſet a-part for his Worſhip. Be not guilty of this *horrid Sacrilege, viz.* of robbing God of that Time which he hath more ſignally made *His*, and conſecrated to his own Service: Prophane not that Holy-day by Sloth and Idleneſs, or by vain Pleaſures, or ſecular Buſineſs either at Home or Abroad. Complain not on this Day, as the prophane *Iſraelites* of old, [*When will the Sabbath be gone, that we may ſell Corn, and ſet forth Wheat?*] i. e. How burthenſom a Seaſon is this Time to us, wherein we can't follow our worldly Deſigns of Gain and Profit? Indeed, there is no occaſion for this Complaint in many Places of this Land: They may, and do buſy themſelves about their ſecular Concerns, and talk of them to others, and travel Abroad in the proſecution of them, as freely as upon any other Day, and they meet with no Reſtraint or Puniſhment. This is one of the crying Sins of this licentious Age, and we ſhall certainly feel the Divine Vengeance for it, if we do not reform. I requeſt you in the mean Time, to be mindful to keep Holy this Chriſtian Sabbath, and to take care to *Redeem your Time*, by a religious and conſcientious Obſervation of it.

IIdly. THOUGH you cannot fill up all the Time of every Day with direct Acts of Religion; yet, be ſure to employ it all in thoſe Things which are allowed and countenanc'd by the Laws of Religion and Piety. Let even your natural and neceſſary Actions tend to and center in Religion and ſpiritual Ends. Reckon it an indiſpenſable part of Godlineſs to be diligent and faithful in your particular Callings, wherein God hath placed you. You may ſerve God even in your worldly Traffick. You may make a Fair or Market tend to Religion. You act Chriſtianly, whilſt you are conſcientious in the diſcharge of that lawful Place or Buſineſs whereby you gain a Livelyhood. Among the People of *Congo*, (a Kingdom in *Africa*) every Man appeaſeth his God (or Idol) with ſuch Things as belong to his *Trade* and *Occupation*; as the Husband-man with Corn, and ſo every one with what his Employment affords: Tho' this be an idolatrous Deluſion, yet thus far we may aſſure our ſelves, that every Man ſerves God in his proper Vocation, and God is well pleaſed with what they duly and lawfully undertake in that Way. Whilſt you conſcientiouſly employ your ſelves about your worldly Affairs, about your Callings and Trades, you act Religiouſly. Thus you may make Religion the Work of your whole Life, and ſo moſt apparently *Redeem the Time*.

IIIdly. THIS may be done likewiſe, by your being moderate in the uſe of all the worldly good Things, which God beſtows upon you. Obſerve, that after this Exhortation in the Text of *Redeeming the Time*, the Apoſtle immediately adjoins in the next Verſe but one, *And be not drunk with Wine, wherein is Exceſs.* As much as to ſay, that an *immoderate uſe* of thoſe Creatures of God, which are good in themſelves, will betray us to a *great expence of Time*, and cauſe us to laviſh away many Hours, which ought rather to be *Redeem'd*. A Drunkard throws away vaſt and large portions of Time, and therefore his Sin, if it were only upon this Account, is very grievous and hainous. Intemperance in eating and drinking is one of the moſt ſhameful Conſumers of Time that can be named; and he that is careful in improving that precious Treaſure, will avoid it above all Things.

IVthly. REMEMBER to be cautious in reſpect of your *Recreations.* No Man can pretend to *Redeem his Time*, who is not exceeding careful here: What a great portion of Time is ſpent by ſome Perſons in fooliſh Sports and *Paſtimes*, as they call them? Alas! How many riſe up from their Beds only to *ſit down to eat and drink*, and afterward *to riſe up to play*, i. e. to ſpend the reſt of the Time in Sports? But he that hath a ſenſe of the Duty I am ſpeaking of, will ſhun *ſome Sports*, becauſe they are Unlawful in themſelves, or apt to breed Scandal; and he will avoid *others*, ſo far as they are immoderate, and take up too much of his Time. Thus *Gaming* robs Men of *Time* as well as *Money*. This muſt be remember'd, that Pleaſure muſt not engroſs thoſe Hours which were made for ſerious Work and Buſineſs. The *Great Mogul* entertains himſelf and his Time with Eunuchs, Concubines, Beaſts and Buffoons, but a *Chriſtian* Man ſhould abhor the naming of them. Vain Delights and Dalliances, lewd Mirth and Revelling, are unſeemly Entertainments for thoſe who profeſs they have Religion to mind. Romances and Play-books, and Novels, and idle prophane Drolls do no ways become them who bear the Name of Chriſtians, and believe ſuch a Book as the Holy Bible. Away with thoſe vain Writings and Compoſures, which are ſerviceable to no other Purpoſe than to debauch the Mind, to corrupt the Fancy, to delude the Imagination, and by Fictions and Chimera's, to alienate the Thoughts from what is real and ſubſtantial, and what a wiſe and ſober Perſon ſhould entertain himſelf with. Bid adieu to thoſe Diverſions (as ſome are pleas'd to ſtile them) which make you unfit for all ſober Thoughts, and Undertakings, and conſume that Time which you will wiſh one Day you had laid out to other Purpoſes.

Vthly. I ADD *this* as another excellent way of *Redeeming the Time*; ſee that you retire from the World very often, abandon all Company, and be Alone: Company devours Time exceſſively, and your greateſt Company-keepers are the worſt Managers of Time. Spend ſome Hours by your ſelves, converſe with your own Minds. It is the peculiar Excellency and Privilege of a good Man, that he can contentedly be alone, that he knows how to entertain himſelf; whereas, on the contrary, bad Men ſhun their own Company, they are afraid of their own Converſe. Evidence it to your ſelves, that you are not of that Number, by your delighting ſometimes in Solitarineſs; and in theſe private Retirements, be always carrying on the deſign of Religion; and this Privacy will fit you for Commerce with others, and make Society mutually Advantagious.

Therefore, VIthly. WHEN you go Abroad take care of this, that you do not mix your ſelves with evil Companions; be very circumſpect as to the Perſons you converſe with; never think you can *Redeem Time*, if you be careleſs as to this particular, for a wonderful deal of Time is loſt (and the Perſon too often) in unprofitable and ſinful Society. Firſt then, avoid the Company of idle and uſeleſs Perſons, and of Buſy-bodies, who are the idleſt People of all, tho' they ſeem always to be doing. And then eſpecially, uſe no familiarity with thoſe who are of an irreligious and prophane Spirit, who ſpend their Days in deſpiſing of God, and trampling upon what is Holy. Theſe Men will tempt you to beſtow your Time after the ſame rate, than which nothing can be more deteſtable and curſed.

VIIthly. IF you would *Redeem the Time*, buſy not your ſelves about mean and trifling Matters, but mind thoſe Things which are Great and Worthy. Here I might re-mind you of this, that too nice Speculations, needleſs Controverſies and Diſputes, take Men off from the Study of ſolid and neceſſary Things. Thoſe require too much Time, and divert us from more ſerviceable Diſquiſitions. They are a laborious Vanity, they nouriſh Pride and Vain-glory, they advance Strife and Contention, they cauſe us to forget Eternity and the Things of another World: Here is Time and Labour loſt, and you will certainly repent that you employed your ſelves about ſuch Toys and Trifles, about Things uncertain and of little Moment; let no part of the Day then be ſpent in matters of this Nature.

VIIIthly and Laſtly. (To ſum up all in few Words) make it your great Care to employ *All the Time* you have, and that very *Well*: Let no Opportunity of doing Good be omitted. Your Time that you ſteal from your ordinary Buſineſs and neceſſary Affairs, your vacant Hours, your ſpare Minutes, muſt all be ſpent to ſome uſeful End. Every Space of your Lives muſt be filled up; let not any Vacuum remain unpleniſh'd. All the Intervals and little Chaſms muſt be ſupplied. You ought to be careful, not only of employing your Years and Months, and Days, but your Hours and very Minutes. Where you cannot find, you muſt make Seaſons of doing ſomething that is Good. You muſt || catch at all fit Times tho' they be never ſo ſhort. You muſt learn to extort a Virtue, to force a religious Act, to urge a Duty. You have but little Time; loſe none of it, but be good Husbands of all of it. In a word, you ſhould * ſo act and live as if the preſent Day were the Boundaries of your whole Life, and as if it were to conclude in the Evening. Which brings me to the next Particular.

|| Captare momenta. *Sueton.*

* Id ago, ut inſtar totius Vitæ ſit Dies. *Senec.*

As I have ſhew'd you how you ought to *begin*, and to *continue* every Day of your Life; ſo it remains, that I let you know what it is to *conclude* the Day well. And this muſt be done,

1. By ſerious Reflection and Meditation. Sit down in good earneſt, and recollect the Paſſages of the paſt Day. Let every Evening be the Audit of the Day's Actions. Call your ſelves to an Account for what you have ſaid or done. If your Leiſures and Opportunities permit, employ part of the Evening in Meditation, in holy Thoughts and Ejaculations, in examining your ſelves before you betake your ſelves to Sleep. Put thoſe Queries to your ſelves, which *Pythagoras* wiſh'd his Scholars to make uſe of: "Wherein have I offended and tranſgreſs'd? What have I committed againſt God and my own Conſcience? What have I omitted which I ſhould have done?" If it was the Practice of a *Heathen* to reckon thus with himſelf, in the cloſe of every Day, ſurely it becomes *Chriſtians* not to fail in ſuch an uſeful and excellent Task.

2. Conclude the Day with ſolemn Acts of Repentance. It ſhould indeed be our *Endeavour* to live every Day ſo as not to offend God; we ſhould *ſtrive* to avoid all Thing which will be diſpleaſing to Him: But becauſe we are weak and frail Creatures, and cannot live without ſinning, yea, the moſt *Righteous Man falls Seven Times a Day*, therefore it is our Duty, as ſoon as we have fallen, to recover our ſelves by hearty and unfeigned Repentance; eſpecially in the cloſe of every Day, we ought to ſet our ſelves ſeriouſly about this Work; for we know not when we lye down, whether we ſhall ever riſe again. It concerns us therefore, not to lye down in an impenitent State, not to ſleep in our Sins; but we ought every Night to run over the Actions of the Day, to ſet our Sins before us, and heartily to renounce them all, We muſt ſhut up the Day with a deep Sorrow and Grief for our paſt Miſcariages, with a perfect Hatred of them, and with firm Reſolutions of Newneſs of Life.

3. Endeavour, as much as in you lieth, to make your Peace with the offended Majeſty of Heaven, by humbly begging Forgiveneſs of your Sins, thro' the Satisfaction and Atonement of Chriſt Jeſus the Redeemer. In the cloſe of every Day, remember to ask Pardon for the Sins of that Day. By no means lye down till thou haſt importunately craved, for Chriſt's Sake and Merits, to have thy Guilt and Sins removed. Sleep not till thou haſt alſo thankfully acknowledg'd the Mercies of the Day paſt, and of thy whole Life: When thou haſt done this, commend thy ſelf, both Soul and Body, into God's Hands, and lye down as if thou wer't not to riſe again alive; as if it were thy laſt Sleep, even that of Death.

And thus I have brought you to the Place where I ſet out at firſt. I told you that *Prayer* and *Thankſgiving* muſt *open the Day*; and you ſee now, that with theſe you muſt ſhut it up, and commend your ſelves to the Author of all your Mercies. Thus it may be ſaid of the *Day*, as well as of the Year, *In ſeſe volvitur*, it ends as it began.

And yet now it will be requiſite to tell you, that the Work is *not yet* at an end. Religion takes care of the *Night* as well as the *Day*. It is not to be thought that the Night was made altogether for Sleep. It may ſometimes be improv'd to the ſame pious Ends which the Day is. The holy Pſalmiſt is our Pattern here, he *remember'd God upon his Bed, and meditated on Him in the Night Watches*, Pſal. lxiii. 6. And he profeſſes thus of himſelf, *When I awake, I am ſtill with thee*, Pſal. cxxxix. 18. Whereas too many, when they awake out of Sleep, are with the evil Spirit, *i. e.* their Thoughts are buſied about thoſe Things which are ſinful; they are with their wicked Companions and Aſſociates, their Minds are ſet upon the Commiſſion of Vice and Folly; whereas it is thus with a great number of Men, the holy Pſalmiſt knew how to employ this Time better, he uſed to be *with God*, he convers'd with him by Prayer and Meditation, his Thoughts were ſet on holy and divine Matters.

Herein we ought to imitate this worthy Saint, *when we awake, we* muſt be *with God*. When we cannot compoſe ourſelves to Reſt, it will be no improper Work to entertain our Thoughts with the Things that are divine and heavenly, to meditate on God's Laws, to ruminate on his Mercies, and to renew thoſe Acts of Repentance, which we had begun before, according to the Example of the ſame holy Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* xvi. 7. *Our Reins ſhould inſtruct us in the night Seaſons*, that is, the Thoughts of our Hearts ſhould chaſtiſe and correct us for the Sins which we had committed in the Day.

Besides, *This* may be a fit time to conſider what we are to do, and how to behave ourſelves in the enſuing Day. To this purpoſe, the *Jews* have a Proverb, *viz.* that Night was created by God, that Man might then think with himſelf of the Work he is to do in the Day. Moreover, when it happens that we are abandon'd by Sleep, what can be more proper and ſuitable than to break forth into Praiſes and Thankſgivings for the Mercies of our Lives, and of the Day paſt eſpecially? Thus the Saints are ſaid to be *Joyful, and to ſing aloud upon their Beds*, Pſal. cxlix. 5. This they do, whilſt they gratefully call to mind the ſeveral Inſtances of God's wonderful Love and Favour to them. And thus I have ſhew'd you how you may begin and end not only the *Day*, but the *Night* with God.

Nor have I *yet* quite finiſh'd this Duty of the Text, of *Redeeming the Time*, though I hope it will be acknowledg'd, that what I have already ſaid is a great Advancement towards it, and approacheth very near to a full compleating of it.

But I would give you a further View of this Duty, by acquainting you with this, that there are *ſome particular Seaſons and Opportunities* of our Lives, which are more eſpecially to be Improv'd and *Redeem'd*. Thus the Days of *Youth* are to be ſecur'd with a more than ordinary Diligence, becauſe the whole Sequel of a Man's Life doth very often depend upon *them*. How many do we obſerve, who in their youthful Years paſs over and mortgage as it were their Souls to the Infernal Spirit, thinking (it may be) to do this only *for a Time?* But how few of them ever *Redeem* what they once pawn'd and laid down?

Satan gains greater Advantages and Power over them daily, and they find themſelves ſo faſt in his Snares, that they cannot get out. How highly then are you concern'd to ſeaſon the *Years of Youth* with holy Deſires, Purpoſes and Endeavours; to inſtruct them aright in their Duty, and to preſs it on them with all the Force imaginable, and earneſtly to call upon them to ſeek the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs in the firſt Place, and to make Heaven and Happineſs their early Care?

Also, the Days of *Bodily Health* are another ſpecial Seaſon, which we are engag'd to improve to the utmoſt. The Time of Pain and Sickneſs is very unfit (if the Heart be not ſanctified before) for the great and neceſſary Acts of Religion, *viz.* Self-Examination, Contrition and Remorſe, Repentance and fitting our ſelves for Death. The Uneaſineſs which accompanies moſt Diſeaſes hinders the right Performance of theſe. It will be Wiſdom therefore, unſpeakable Wiſdom, to mind the Welfare of our Souls before we fall under weakneſs of Body, to work out our Salvation whilſt God is pleas'd to give us a ſound Uſe of our Faculties, and to bleſs us with the Enjoyment of bodily Strength and Health.

This alſo I commend to your Thoughts, that *the Day of Peace and Proſperity*, and the Fruition of the good Things of this Life, is another ſeaſonable Opportunity of doing our Duty with great Alacrity and Vigour, and of omitting nothing that may tend to our everlaſting Welfare. When God vouchſafes to confer upon you Plenty and Abundance, yea, if he bleſſeth you only with *Sufficiency* (which is as much as you can deſire) be it known unto you, that you have now *a Price in your Hands*, and you are guilty of great *Folly* and *Sottiſhneſs* if you *have no Heart to it*, if you know not how to make uſe of it, that is, if the good Things of the Earth lead you not to Heaven, if Temporal Favours engage you not to make Spiritual Returns, if the Goodneſs of God to you in this Life doth not raiſe up your Minds to ſeek after that tranſcendent Happineſs which is in another.

But, above all, the *Day of Grace*, and of God's offering the *Means* in order to it, is a Seaſon which you are to attend to with the greateſt Care. Improve this Opportunity, R*edeem this Time*, or your Condition will be eternally deplorable and unſufferable. *Behold, now is the accepted Time*; *behold, now is the Day of Salvation!* You are not ſure of another Opportunity, if you neglect this which is now in your Hands. Therefore, whilſt God calls unto you, remember to hearken; whilſt the Spirit ſtrives with you, dare not to reſiſt.

How do you know but that this holy Dove, like that of *Noah*, if you let it go from you once and again, may never return back to you? *Jeruſalem* miſs'd *her Day*, ſhe let paſs *her Opportunity*, and that caus'd the merciful Jeſus to weep over her, and to lament her Deſtruction. *Know* then *in this your Day the Things which belong unto your Peace*, before *they are* for ever *hid from your Eyes*. Let not the Word of God this Day be ineffectual upon you; let not thoſe other Diſcourſes which I before offer'd to you, be forgot by you. They are the *Hearers* that make good or bad *Sermons*; you may cauſe them to be of the former ſort, if you will ſeriouſly ſet about the Practice of them. Wherefore I call upon you to comply with the Tenders of Salvation, accept of the gracious Offers of Mercy, repent of your evil Ways, *turn from your Tranſgreſſions, ſo Iniquity ſhall not be your Ruin.* Thus I have fully anſwer'd that Queſtion, What is it to *Redeem the Time?*

III. According to my propounded Method I proceed to ſhew you how *reaſonable* it is that we ſhould *Redeem the Time.* You will find this to be a moſt rational Performance, when you have conſider'd of theſe following Things. 1. The ineſtimable Value of Time. 2. The Brevity and Uncertainty of it. 3. The Impoſſibility of Recalling it. 4. The End and Deſign of God's intruſting us with it. 5. The Account we muſt give for it.

1. Conſider the ineſtimable Value of Time. Upon this depends Eternity it ſelf; that is, a never-failing Happineſs or Woe will be adjudg'd to mankind according to their employing and managing of this. Who then would not *prize* it? Who eſpecially that hath ſpent a great deal of Time in the World, and is approaching to the End of it, will not highly value this Bleſſing? Indeed theſe are the Perſons who generally eſteem Time aright. *How much Time have I to repent of, and how little to do it in?* was Sir *Henry Wotton*'s uſual Saying toward the cloſe of his Days. *O! I have loſt a world of Time, that moſt precious thing in the World!* cried that great Scholar and Glory of *France*, *Salmaſius*, when he came to die, (tho' the learned World can teſtify how well he ſpent his Time.) Go ask *dying* Men, and they will tell you how *valuable* Time is. You may underſtand the Worth of Time by thoſe dreadful Complaints and Outcries which many forlorn Sinners have made when they ſaw Death approaching to them. Then they began to have a true *Eſtimate of Time*; then they begg'd for the lengthening out of their Lives but for a few Moments; they that never cared for this rich Treaſure before, now were arriv'd to a right underſtanding of its Worth, and if they had the whole World at their Diſpoſal, they would part with it for the Enjoyment of a few Minutes, wherein they might cry for Mercy, and not be hurried forthwith to the Torments of the Damned, where Time ſhall be no more. Think with your ſelves what Proffers ſome have made on their Death-beds (tho' fondly and in vain) for the purchaſe of a little time longer: How affrightingly and paſſionately have they cried out for a few Moments reſpite? *Inducias uſq; ad mane*! O for the happy Shine of another Day! O that I could live till to morrow! O what a reformed Man ſhould I be, if I might have further Time granted me! Think what the forlorn Souls of the Damned would give (if they had any thing to give) for a few Hours return to this State again, for a ſhort Ceſſation of their Pains and Torments. *That* which thou art ſo laviſh of, namely Time, thoſe miſerable Creatures in Hell would give all the World for, if it were in their Power.

Think of this, and underſtand the *Reaſonableneſs* of the Duty I have been diſplaying before you. You cannot ſet too high a Price upon Time. Let me deſire but this of you, that you would eſteem Time *now*, as you would if you were on your *Death-beds*; then you would value every little parcel of it: and why then do you rate it ſo meanly at preſent? Why do you ſquander it away, as if it would not be gone faſt enough? Why do you miſemploy your Time, when there is (for ought you know) a very little of it left you? I beſeech you conſider the *Excellency* and *Preciouſneſs* of Time, and then you will at any rate purchaſe and *redeem* it?

2. You will not fail to do ſo, when you ſeriouſly think how *ſhort* and *uncertain* your Time is. This is a common Theme, the Brevity of Man's Life: but certainly if it were duly weigh'd and ſeriouſly thought upon, it would be hugely inſtrumental to a holy Converſation. Conſider how faſt the Minutes fly away, and with what *Speed* Death is coming towards you, and then you will haſten your Repentance, and *whatſoever your Hand findeth to do*, you will *do it with your Might*. Your Life is like ſome great Mart or Fair; it laſts but for ſo many Days; it will ſoon have a period; the Booths muſt be taken down, the Stalls muſt be remov'd; the Wares and Merchandize muſt be diſpos'd of, and every one of us muſt repair Home, even to his *long Home*. Therefore diſpatch your Buſineſs, whilſt this Fair laſts, finiſh what you have to do, whilſt Life continues; *work the Works of him that ſent you, while it is Day*; *for the Night cometh, when no Man can work*. Embrace all Opportunities of doing what is acceptable to God, and what may prove comfortable to your own Conſciences. Chuſe out the fitteſt Seaſons of doing or receiving Good. It is ſaid of *Judas*, that *he ſought an Opportunity* (a * *Fit Seaſon*, as the Greek Word ſignifies) *to betray Chriſt*. Shall vile Sinners look out for the Fitteſt Seaſons to accompliſh their wicked Deſigns, and ſhall not we watch all Opportunities, ſhall not we ſeek the moſt ſeaſonable Times to ſerve our dear Lord and Maſter, and to perform his Commandments which are ſo advantageous to us? A *Right Timing* of Things is a Chriſtian Man's Task; and we cannot ſhew a better Inſtance of it than in a ſeaſonable laying hold of the Mercy which is offer'd to us, and of Redeeming the Time which is ſo ſhort and uncertain.

* Εὐκαιρίαν. Luk. xxii. 6.

3. Redeem the Time, improve the preſent Seaſon, for if you let it paſs, it cannot be recall'd. It was a Notion of that learned Knight Sir *Kenelm Digby*, that the recalling of Time is no impoſſible Thing: for, ſaith he, It is but "putting again all Things that had Motion into the ſame State they were in at "that Moment unto which Time was to be reduced back, and from thence "letting it travel on again by the ſame Motions, and on the ſame Wheels it "roll'd upon before, and the Buſineſs is done." The Philoſopher, you may perceive by his *Stile*, is almoſt become a *Poet*; and indeed it could not be otherwiſe, when he preſents us with ſuch a mere *Fiction*, as the real recalling of Time. Things may come to the former poſture again: but that doth not annul their being what they were before. It implies an abſolute Contradiction, to make the Things that have been, not to have been; and therefore it is impoſſible this ſhould be effected even by the Divine Power. There is no Loſs like that of Time, † ſay the *Jewiſh* Rabbins; and *This* is a ſufficient Reaſon that may be given of it, *viz.* becauſe Time being once loſt cannot be recover'd, and ſo is loſt for ever.

|| Non eſt jactura Similis jacturæ Temporis.

Now then having *Time*, be careful to make uſe of it. Do not imagine thou haſt it ſo faſt by the *Foretop*, that thou canſt hold it in that poſture as long as thou pleaſeſt. Time is haſtening away; and if thou ſhouldſt call it to thee when it is gone, and cry as thoſe Children thou readeſt of, *Come up thou Bald-pate*: this will prove very vain and ineffectual; for the Time which is paſt, never returns again. Let it be thy buſineſs to ſecure the *Preſent*, ſeeing what is *gone* cannot be retriev'd, only ſo far as it may be done by an extraordinary Diligence for the time to come.

4. Think what the *Deſign of Heaven* is in giving us Time and Opportunities, and then the Duty of the Text will be found to be moſt reaſonable. To what purpoſe is Time prolonged to us, but that we ſhould ſpend it all to the excellent Ends of our Creation, namely, to honour God in the World, to be ſerviceable to our Brethren, to promote our own Welfare and Happineſs, and to omit nothing which we know to be our Duty? Think of this, and then you will reckon them no other than beſotted Fools, who complain that they know

not

not what to do with their Time. Their Hours lie upon their Hands, they ſay: they can't tell how to paſs their Time away. O fond Wretches! do you know what you ſay? Do you talk like thoſe who were ſent into the World to do thoſe great Things before-mention'd? Is God to be ſerv'd, are the Laws of Chriſtianity to be obey'd? Is your own and others Happineſs to be look'd after; and yet do you complain of too much time? For ſhame retract this unaccountable Folly and Madneſs, and be convinced at length that you ought to be inquiſitive how you may Redeem, not throw away your Time. Make much of every little parcel of Time. * To be Niggards and ſparing of this is a very honeſt and laudable ſort of Covetouſneſs.

* Solius Temporis honeſta eſt Avaritia. *Senec.*

5. God will call you to an Account for your Time, and be ſevere with you for the Abuſe of it: therefore you are engag'd to improve it to the utmoſt. All our Time is reckon'd; all our Opportunities are numbred. The Prophet *Jeremiah* tells the *Jews*, that || *he had ſpoken unto them* no leſs than *three and twenty Years.* And our Saviour reckons up his Years of Preaching to them, * *Theſe three Years* (ſaith he) *I come ſeeking Fruit.* I pray remember it, you that are Hearers muſt give an Account of your particular Time. It may be you little think of it, that you of this Pariſh have above 100 Sermons preach'd to you in a Year. And do you not believe Practice ſhould be anſwerable to this Frequency of Hearing? Yea, certainly, if you have been Hearers and Learners a long Seaſon, if * *for the Time ye ought to be Teachers* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) then your Account muſt be extraordinary. God expects that your Improvements ſhould be proportionable to the Time in which you have enjoy'd the means of Grace. You will find this to be true at the laſt great Reckoning.

|| *Jer.* xxv. 3.
* Luke xiii. 7.
* Heb. v. 12.

I read of *Amaſis*, an *Egyptian* King, that he made an Order, that every Man ſhould once a Year give a particular Account how he ſpent his Time, and in what way he lived. My Brethren, there is Day a coming, when you muſt all give an Account of your Time; all your Time muſt be reckon'd for at the great and general Audit of the World. O that you would prepare your ſelves for it; which is done thus. Be ever very careful about your expence of Time; think how you may beſt lay it out; employ it ſo as may be moſt for your Comfort another Day. Let not the Things of the World take up the beſt of your Time. Above all things take care to be at leiſure for Heaven; be ſure you find Time for Eternity. Be uſeful in your Lives upon all Occaſions; make it your Buſineſs always to do or receive Good. If you do thus, you will be able to give a good Account of your Time.

And you eſpecially, who have long enjoy'd the Opportunities of Grace; you, who many Years have been Partakers of the Divine Mercy and Goodneſs, ought in a more ſignal manner to walk worthy of this peculiar Favour. It was an Aggravation of that Woman *Jezabel*'s Crime, and certainly it would aggravate her Puniſhment, that *God gave her ſpace to repent, and ſhe repented not*, Rev. ii. 21. And what was that which our Saviour upbraided the *Jews* with, in *John* vii. 33. *Yet a little while I am with you.* As if he had ſaid, I will not yet leave you; I will ſtay with you, and ſtill remind you of your Duty; I will ſtill check and curb you for your Sins; I will be a conſtant Monitor, and warn you of your Danger, as well as of your Guilt. You ſhall not complain that you had not Time allow'd you; no, I will yet be with you: But be it known unto you that *this, this* will increaſe your Condemnation, if you do not make good Uſe of it. It will enhance your Guilt, that Time and Opportunities have been ſtill indulged to you, and yet you have not improved them. Be aſſur'd of it, that a miſerable Eternity ſhall be the Recompence of your not redeeming that Time which hath been ſo graciouſly lengthen'd out unto you. Thus you ſee how *reaſonable* it is to practiſe this Duty which I have been commending to you.

IV. I Proceed to the *Application* of all that hath been ſaid; take it in theſe three Particulars. 1. Thoſe are to be rebuked who have miſpent their Time. 2. Let us beg of God to forgive us the miſpenſe of our Time. 3. Be exhorted for the future to redeem it. Firſt, The Text ſharply rebukes them who miſſpend their Time. And here, If I ſhould make a particular Enquiry after the miſpenſe of your precious Hours, how faulty would many, nay, moſt of you be found? If I ſhould go into your Houſes, and ranſack your ſeveral Apartments, how guilty would you appear? If I ſhould obſerve what you ſay or do in your

Parlours, or in your Chambers, in your Cloſets, or in your places of Buſineſs, of Refection, of Talk, or Retirement, I ſhould find a great deal of your Time miſemploy'd.

AND then if I ſhould ſtep Abroad, and viſit the Houſes of Mirth and Entertainment, what a vaſt miſpenſe of Time ſhould I behold there? Great Numbers continually in thoſe Places watch at the Wine, and at their Sports, drink and play away whole Nights, thereby offending God by an extraordinary Licentiouſneſs. Theſe Men turn Day into Night, and Night into Day, perverting the Order of Nature, and living like Owls and Batts rather than Men. Theſe impair that Health and Strength of Body, which ſhould be ſerviceable to Religion and Holineſs; theſe embezzle that Eſtate and Income, which is beſtow'd on them for neceſſary Uſes of Life, and for the relieving of the Diſtreſſed, and the promoting of the deſigns of Piety. If there be any here who know themſelves guilty in this kind, I beg of them that they would ſeriouſly attend to this Admonition, and ſit down and conſider what a ſhameful Thing it is to ſpend, or rather throw away their Time thus; particularly *that* part of Time which was not deſign'd for Gaming and Drinking, for Lewdneſs and Debauchery, but was mercifully given them for their neceſſary Reſt and Repoſe, that they might thereby be more fit for the Performance of the great Duties of their Lives.

Secondly, LET us all beg of God to forgive us the miſpending of our Time. You read how the fooliſh Virgins loitered away their Hours; when they ſhould have been buying Oyl, they ſlept ſecurely; and you know this was the ſad Event of it, the Shops were ſhut up, and they were ſhut out: Thus they were puniſh'd for their fooliſh laviſhing of their Time. We might all expect the ſame, we might juſtly look to be excluded from Mercy for the like Fault. * We do not *want* Time (as ſome are apt to complain) but we *waſte* a great deal of that which we have. Three Years and a half was enought for Chriſt to do all his great Work in, to effect ſuch mighty Things in order to Man's Salvation. A little Time well ſpent will produce great and wonderful Things; but we have a great deal of Time, and do little or nothing to the Purpoſe. We throw away many Hours in Idleneſs, or in unlawful Buſineſs; we ſpend many Days in forgetfulneſs of God and our Duty, and of the Account we muſt make. Let us earneſtly implore the divine Goodneſs, that this may not be laid to our Charge; and let us with thankful Hearts acknowledge that good Hand which hath hitherto ſpared us. But,

* Non parum habemus Temporis, ſed multum perdimus. *Senec.*

Thirdly, BE exhorted for the future to *Redeem the Time.* You have ſpent much of it vainly and ſinfully, reſolve that you will do ſo no more: It is not too late, I hope to undertake this Taſk, but do it ſpeedily, otherwiſe your Endeavours may prove too late. Let every one that hears me this Day go Home and ſpend his Time better; and the rather, becauſe you have ſo long neglected this Duty. To encourage you to the Practice of it, I will ſet ſome Examples before your Eyes. Remember how *Titus Veſpaſian* cried out, *complaining he had loſt a Day*, when no act of Beneficence was done that Day by him. How many Days and Months do we loſe, and yet are far from complaining of it? *Ariſtotle* was a great Huſband of his Time, elſe we ſhould not have heard of his *Brazen Ball* which fell into a Baſin of Braſs as ſoon as he ſlept, to call him out of his Sleep. *Seneca*'s Bed of which he ſpeaks in one of his Epiſtles, and tells us, that there was no print of his Body to be ſeen in it, is an Argument that he ſpent not his Hours ſuperfluouſly in Sleep. *Elian* acquaints us that the old *Lacedemonians* were ſuch thrifty managers of their Time, that they permitted none among them to *walk*, that is, for Pleaſure and Diverſion. The buſy *Turks* ſeem to have aped this People, for they never walk backwards and forwards. *Peter Ramus* the fam'd Logician blam'd himſelf that the Smiths and Carpenters were at work before he was ſtirring. We are told that *Budæus, Calvin,* and *Turnebus* (three notable *French* Students) ſpent ſome Hours in Study even on their Marriage Day. Such Students we have had at Home, as Bp. *Sanderſon*, Dr. *Hammond*, Mr. *Gregory*, the firſt of whom ſpent Eleven Hours, the ſecond, Thirteen or Fourteen, the third, Sixteen every Day in his Study. I do not mention this as if it were to paſs into Practice with all Perſons; for every one hath not ſo much Time allowed them, and all cannot bear ſuch a continued Application of Mind. That which I deſign, is only this, that you would, according to your Ability, imitate theſe worthy Perſons in their prudent *Care of their Time*: Improve this excellent Treaſure, in order to the ſtudy of Virtue and Holineſs, and the ſecuring of your eternal Welfare and Happineſs.

We have ſtood idle too long, or we have been employ'd about Things of poor and mean Concernment. We have wrangled and diſputed, and addicted our ſelves to Parties. Atheiſm, Irreligion, and Prophaneneſs have ſtoln in and taken Poſſeſſion of the Houſe, whilſt we have been contending among our ſelves, about the Hangings and Painting of it, and ſome of its Furniture. For ſhame let us leave off our mooting and ſquabbling. Theſe petty Things have taken up too much of our Time already; and we have found it by Experience, that thoſe who ſpend Time in Trifles, cannot be at leiſure for Things of Moment. Let us then now mind our great Concern, *let us* (as the Apoſtle adviſeth us) *do good whilſt we have Time*, Gal. vi. 10. Tho' aged Perſons, and ſuch as have not ſo much Time left them as others, are more eſpecially obliged to husband their Hours with great Diligence and Caution, (like Travellers they muſt put on, when they ſee the Sun going down: The nearer they approach to their End, the quicker ſhould be their Motion) yet the diligent *Redeeming of Time* is a Duty which you *All* are to be engag'd in. It is a Catholic Work; none of you are to be excus'd from it. And whereas, it is generally thought by *Great* and *Rich* Men, that they are not bound ſo ſtrictly as others, to be careful how they ſpend their Time; (they having no Calling and neceſſary Work to attend to) this is a great Miſtake; and on the contrary, it is certain that *theſe*, of all other Perſons, are moſt obliged to this Duty: For they being Men of Eſtates, and Honour, and placed by God in Authority, have Obligations upon them to be more diligent than others, and ſo to do more good than many others are capable of doing, becauſe of *their* meaner and lower Stations. But *theſe* have greater Opportunities of honouring of God, and laying out their Time to the beſt Advantage; and therefore, they are more eſpecially concern'd in this Duty. In ſhort, neither Age, nor Sex, nor Quality can exempt any of you from this great and neceſſary Employment. My Text and my Diſcourſe reach every one of you, and plainly tell you, that you have no Time to beſtow on Sin and Vanity. All that Time you have is little enough to do your Great Work in. And ſeeing *Time* is a Paſſage to *Eternity*, labour to make the moſt of it you can, and to improve it to your endleſs Happineſs; that after a few Days ſpent here in theſe Tabernacles, you may not fail of being admitted into the everlaſting Habitations and Manſions of Glory.

EPH. V. 16.

Becauſe the Days are Evil.

HAVING diſpatch'd the firſt and main Part of the Text, which contain'd an *indiſpenſible Duty*; I now paſs to the remainder of the Words, which are a *Reaſon* or *Motive* to enforce the Practice of the Duty; *Becauſe the Days are evil*. You are engag'd ſaith the Apoſtle, to *walk circumſpectly, not as Fools, but as Wiſe*, for this Reaſon, *Becauſe the Days are Evil*; which may be underſtood in a twofold Senſe. 1ſt. The Days are here noted for the moral Evil, and Sin committed in them; evil Manners make the Times Evil. Thoſe are the moſt evil Days, wherein moſt Sin is committed, wherein Vice and Iniquity abound. Or, 2dly. The meaning may be, that the Days are accompanied with penal Evil, *i. e.* Troubles and Diſtreſſes, Afflictions and Croſſes: Thus *all the Days of the Afflicted are Evil*, Prov. xv. 15. The Times the Apoſtle liv'd in were Times of Danger and Calamity, of Tribulation and Perſecution.

Thus in ſhort you ſee how the *Days* might be ſaid to be *Evil*. And accordingly, the Remark on this part of the Words is this, That one great Reaſon or Motive to walk circumſpectly, and to *Redeem the Time*, is the evilneſs of the Times we now live in: Or thus, more generally, The more wicked and perillous the Times are, the more careful ſhould we be to act and live as becometh Chriſtians. The worſer the Times are, the better ſhould we be.

THE *reaſonableneſs* of this Propoſition will appear, Firſt in *regard of God*, who is pleas'd to ſtand by us in the worſt Times, and therefore we are obliged to ſtand up for Him. Our Caſe may be that of the Apoſtle, in 2 *Tim.* iv. 16, 17. When *no Man ſtood with him, but all Men forſook him*, he thankfully acknowledgeth that *the Lord ſtood with him, and ſtrengthned him, and delivered him out of the Mouth of the Lyon.* In ſuch Circumſtances as theſe, we are moſt ſignally engaged to aſſert the Cauſe of God and Religion, and let our exemplary Holineſs be a Teſtimony of our Gratitude. Beſides, God is moſt glorified by an undaunted Holineſs in Time of Danger and Diſtreſs, which uſually is a Time of Apoſtacy and Revolting. Wherefore, in a general Defection our Courage and Faithfulneſs ought to be ſeen more conſpicuouſly. When there is a general Rebellion, it becomes us to ſhew our Loyalty in an eminent manner. The more we ſee Religion diſhonour'd and vilified by its Enemies, the more ſhould we uphold and extol it, and therein ſhew our ſelves its true Friends. Thus the more *Rabſhekah* rail'd and blaſphem'd, the more *Hezekiah* and *Iſaiah* bleſſed and praiſed God. By acting thus, we bring the greateſt Honour to Him that we Creatures are able to do.

Secondly, IN *regard of thoſe whom we live amongſt*; we are concern'd in the worſt Times to look moſt carefully to our Lives and Converſations. For in ſuch a Seaſon as this, we may light on a happy Opportunity of converting others, and of reforming the World by our exemplary Behaviour. The Apoſtle exhorts the *Philippians* to *be blameleſs and harmleſs, the Sons of God without Rebuke, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe Generation, among whom* (ſaith he) *ye ſhine as Lights in the World, holding Faith and the Word of Life.* The wicked, as perverſe as they are, may be overcome by this *Light* and *Luſtre* of your Graces; they ſeeing your Light ſo ſhining before them, may be excited to leave their Works of Darkneſs, and to walk as Children of Light, and to embrace thoſe ways of Holineſs which before they abhorr'd. Your goodly Examples in times of great Defection, may be inſtrumental to the winning over the lewdeſt Men to the owning of Religion, and reverencing of the Power of it in your Lives.

Thirdly, IN *regard of our ſelves*, it is our Concern in evil Times to walk ſtrictly and circumſpectly, and to be very exact in our Lives; Becauſe,

Firſt, HEREBY we evidence to our ſelves, that we have in us the Truth and Life of Grace. To comply with the wicked Practices of the Times, and to go along with the worſt Men in their moſt vicious Enterprizes and Actions, is too evident a Token that the real Principle or ſpiritual Life is decay'd in us; as the Fiſh that ever goes down the Stream may be ſuſpected for dead. When * *the Sons of God* mixed with *the Daughters of Men*, when the Poſterity of *Seth* convers'd with and were polluted by the Off-ſpring of *Cain*; when they that would be thought to be Members of the true Church, were guilty of the ſame Enormities which were to be found in the Prophane, and thoſe that were Strangers to God, it was a manifeſt Argument that true Grace began to die in them, or rather, that they never were Poſſeſſors of any true and ſound Principle of Goodneſs; but on the contrary, it is a ſign there is ſome Life and Vigour in us, when it makes us ſwim againſt the Torrent of Prophaneneſs and Irreligion, which breaks in upon a Nation; when it effectually enables us to oppoſe and ſet our ſelves reſolutely againſt the prevailing and reigning Sins of the Times, and cauſes us to keep our ſelves free and unſpotted from them; this ſhews the Force and Virtue of our inward Principle: this argues the vital Power of our Graces.

* Gen. vi. 4.

YEA, true Goodneſs and Virtue are always exalted and made more Vigorous by the corruption and wickedneſs of the Times. There is a moral or religigious *Antiperiſtaſis* as well as a phyſical one. There is a repulſe in Bodies, whereby either Heat or Cold are made more ſtrong and active by the reſtraining of the contrary on every Side: So there is ſomething like this to be ſeen in thoſe that are truly and ſincerely Good, when they are encompaſs'd with Contraries, when they live in the midſt of Vice, and are environ'd with evil Men; their Virtue grows more vigorous and ſtrong; the true Spirit of Zeal and Fire of Love are hotteſt in them in the ſharpeſt and coldeſt Seaſons; their Graces are more inflam'd and increas'd by Oppoſition; which is as great a Teſtimony as can be of the true vital Energy of ſaving Grace in them; and this being no mean Solace to the Souls of good Men, they ought certainly to endeavour after that which alone will procure it, *viz.* a cleaving unto God and his Ways, in the Times of the greateſt Apoſtacy and Prophaneneſs.

Secondly, WHEN the Days are *Evil*, that is *Perillous* and Calamitous; we know not how long we may be permitted to appear for Religion; we know not how ſoon we may be cut off by its implacable Adverſaries, at leaſt be deprived of the Opportunity of doing that Good which at preſent it is in our Power to do: Therefore we ought to be more than ordinary ſtirring, and to muſter up all our Forces, and to make our *laſt Effort* as it were, becauſe we cannot tell, but that it may really prove to be ſo. *Give a Portion to Seven, and alſo to Eight, i. e.* Do all the Good you can, and to as many as you are able; *for you know not what Evil ſhall be upon the Earth*; that is, what *further Evil* will befal you, is unknown to you. The Malice of the World is exceeding great, and you may feel the Effects of it in a ſhort Time: Their Deſign is to do you all the Miſchief they can, therefore do you all the Good you can. You converſe even among Devils, ſee therefore that you live like Saints.

Thirdly, THIS is the only way to provide for your ſelves an Ark, a Refuge, a Sanctuary in the Days of God's Indignation: When the Times are not only ſinful, but calamitous, when God's Judgments are abroad in the Earth, you muſt prepare your ſelves to receive them by a blameleſs Life and Converſation. Do you ſee the Times wicked and dangerous? Then take care to walk harmleſly and uprightly, that you may eſcape the Danger. We read, that when *the wickedneſs of Men was great on the Earth*, when an univerſal Corruption had overſpread the Old World, *Noah* being a juſt and holy Man (which was a rare thing in thoſe Days) *found Grace in the Eyes of the Lord*, and was preſerved, with his Family, when the reſt of Mankind periſh'd by Water. So God deliver'd Righteous *Lot*, when he turn'd the Cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* into Aſhes. There was a Command given by God (as the Prophet * *Ezekiel* acquaints us) to *ſet a Mark on the Foreheads of thoſe that ſighed and cried for all the Abominations which were done in the midſt of* Jeruſalem; and this *Mark* was in order to their *Preſervation* from thoſe dreadful Judgments which overtook that wicked Race of Men who perſiſted in their Sins, and laid not thoſe Abominations to Heart.

* Cap. ix. 4.

IN *Mal.* iii. you read of the groſs and heinous Sins of the *Jewiſh* People, and how at laſt they cried, that ‖ it *was in vain to ſerve God*, and *to keep his Ordinances.* But *then*, (that *then* is Emphatical; *then*, when Sin abounded, and was arrived to this Height) *they that feared the Lord ſpake often one to another*, encourag'd themſelves in Holineſs, *and the Lord hearken'd and heard it, and a Book of Remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name. And they ſhall be mine, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, in that Day when I make up my Jewels, and I will ſpare them as a Man ſpareth his own Son that ſerveth him.* By being ſtrict and holy, we eſcape the Calamity which falls upon others; or we prevent the Harm, tho' not the Blow; we ſave our Souls, tho' our Bodies periſh in the common Judgment: This is the rational Account of the Obſervation on this laſt Clauſe of the Text.

‖ Ver. 14, 16.

I WILL now *apply* it to our ſelves. Our *Days are Evil* in both the Senſes before mention'd, *viz.* in reſpect of *Sin* and *Danger*. I begin with the firſt; The Times we live in abound with Iniquity. Theſe being the *laſt Days*, it is no wonder that the Apoſtle's Prophecy is fulfilled among us; that the Men of this Age are * *lovers of their own ſelves, proud, blaſphemous, diſobedient to Parents; unthankful, unholy, without natural Affection; Truce-breakers, falſe Accuſers, incontinent, fierce, deſpiſers of thoſe that are Good, Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of Pleaſure more than lovers of God, having a form of Godlineſs, but denying the Power thereof.* Yea, we live in an Age, wherein a very *form of Godlineſs* is not to be found among ſome Men; they hate any Thing that looks like Piety, they abhor all Religion. We have great numbers of Men who call in queſtion all the Notions of Good and Evil, Right and Wrong, Juſt and Unjuſt. The *French* Philoſopher would have a Man *once* in his Life *doubt* of all Things; but

* 2 Tim. iii. 2, &c.

there are ſome amongſt us, who profeſs this *doubting all their Lives*; nay, (which is worſe,) ſome openly *oppoſe* and *deny* the Principles of Religion and Virtue. Hence it is that Atheiſm and Prophaneneſs are viſible every where, and whatſoever is holy and venerable is expos'd and ridicul'd; the moſt material Articles of Chriſtianity are call'd in queſtion, and the very Foundations of Religion are ſhock'd.

Were Mens Mouths ever wider open'd with horrid Oaths and Curſes? Were the Worſhip of God and his Ordinances ever more neglected and vilified? We live in an Age wherein Lying, Falſhood and Deceit are grown faſhionable: Fraud is mingled with all Profeſſions, and corrupts all Ranks and Conditions of Men: Sincerity and honeſt Dealing are counted low, ſneaking and ſordid Things; but to manage Trade and Buſineſs with Craft, and to be able to over-reach others, is a commendable Talent. We are fallen into thoſe Times, wherein Unchriſtian Diviſions and Quarrels, Hatred and Reviling prevail, and Brotherly Love and Charity are excluded from the Society of Men. When had *Mammon* more Servants and Worſhippers? When had Luxury and Drunkenneſs a greater Retinue than they have at this Day? When had Uncleanneſs, Laſciviouſneſs, and Wantonneſs gain'd more to them? What great Numbers of Men and Women are infamous for Vanity, Pride and Idleneſs? Do we not live in an Age wherein Unthankfulneſs and Murmuring are very rife? And if I ſhould name Hypocriſy and Diſſimulation, are they not known Blemiſhes of this Land?

And the great *Aggravation* of all theſe Sins is, that thoſe who commit them are bold and daring, frontleſs and impudent, and proclaim their Sin as *Sodom*, and hide it not. It is now as it was in *Julian*'s Time; * Vice is Honourable and Worſhipful; it is not only not puniſh'd, but in many Places preferr'd and rewarded. Court, City, Country are over-run with all manner of Vice. There is Corruption and Wickedneſs among all Societies, Callings and Employments; the Student, the Tradeſman, the Labourer, thoſe of the Gown, the Sword, the Shop, the Fields, the Seas. I know that the Wickedneſs of the *preſent Age*, whenever it was, hath been an old Complaint, but now there is more Cauſe than ever: For now Men add this to all their Sins, that they are ſenſeleſs and ſtupid; they practiſe their evil Courſes without regret and remorſe; they go on in their Impieties, as if there were no God, no Judgment, no Hell. Thus if a *general* Pollution be Evil, then *theſe Days are Evil*.

And *now* therefore more eſpecially, it is your Concern to walk Circumſpectly, and to Redeem the Time, *becauſe* the Days are Evil: *Becauſe* Atheiſm and Prophaneneſs are ſo Epidemical, you are concern'd to hate and avoid them now more ſignally, and to addict your ſelves to the Service of God, with all Reverence and Devotion. *Becauſe* Injuſtice and Diſhoneſty towards Men are ſo apparent in the generality of Mens Lives, you muſt think your ſelves engag'd to abhor and abandon thoſe ſcandalous Sins, and to practiſe the contrary. *Becauſe* Pride, and Laſciviouſneſs, and Drunkenneſs are become creditable amongſt moſt Perſons, you ought to baniſh theſe Vices with more than ordinary Care, and to diſcover an exemplary Humility, Chaſtity, and Sobriety in your Lives. In ſhort, you muſt be every way more ſtrict and wary in your Converſation, becauſe you are amongſt thoſe who indulge all manner of Looſeneſs and Licentiouſneſs.

In this you may be encourag'd by the Example of the moſt eminent Servants of God, who have ſtriven to be ſignally Virtuous and Good in Times of general Impiety; and this their ſingular Practice is taken notice of and commended by the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture. *Lot* lived in a great City, and very populous, but where there were very few Righteous Men to be found, and yet he was not corrupted by thoſe wicked People amongſt whom he ſojourn'd. *Job* was *perfect and upright in the Land of Uz.* The Place of his Habitation is remarkable. It is *no* wonder to be Good in good Company; but *Job feared God and eſchewed Evil* in a Country where there were but few that had the true Knowledge of God, and walk'd in his ways; which redounds to the eternal Honour of this holy Man. *Elias* ſtood firm and unſhaken amongſt a People that were almoſt overſpread with Idolatry: He had as great a Zeal for the true God, as they had for their falſe one, which was very great indeed. We read of *Joſeph* and *Moſes* in *Pharaoh*'s Court, (for all the *Egyptian* Kings in thoſe Times were *Pharaohs*.

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* Κακὸν ἐστὶ, καὶ τίμιον, καὶ βωμοῖς καὶ θυσίαις τιμώμενον. *Greg. Nazianz.* 3. *Orat. contr. Julian.*

We read of *Obadiah* in *Ahab*'s Court, of *Daniel* in *Nebuchadnezzar*'s, and of Believers in *Herod*'s Houſe, and even Saints in *Nero*'s Palace. *Joſeph of Arimathæa*, tho' a Counſellor belonging to the High-Prieſt's Conſiſtory, would *not conſent to the Counſel and Deed* of the other Counſellors and Chief-Prieſts that contriv'd our Saviour's Death, *Luke* xxiii. 51.

Those Words of Chriſt to the Church of *Pergamos* are remarkable, *Rev.* ii. 13, 14. *I know thy Works, and where thou dwelleſt, even where Satan's Seat is.* The *Devil's Throne* is erected where Idolatry is ſet up, as it was in *Pergamos*, as ſome * learned Writers aſſure us. But the true Members of the Church in this Place, were not infected with this groſs Sin, but retain'd the pure Worſhip of God even in the midſt of Idolaters. *Thou holdeſt faſt my Name, and haſt not denied my Faith, even in thoſe Day wherein* Antipas (Bp of *Pergamos*) *was my faithful Martyr, who was* (or ſhall be ſhortly) *ſlain among you, where Satan dwelleth.* The Place of their Abode is taken notice of, and their Integrity is enhans'd from it; their Conſtancy is the more remarkable and commendable, becauſe of the Temptations they were ſurrounded with, becauſe of the wicked and corrupt Times they lived in. To continue good and upright in theſe Circumſtances, is truly praiſe-worthy, and highly acceptable with God. It is the Credit and Glory of Chriſtians to be good in bad Times. Marvel not then that our Apoſtle calls upon the *Epheſians* to walk circumſpectly and ſtrictly, and to Redeem the Time, *becauſe the Days are Evil*: And if this was an Argument in St. *Paul*'s Days, I think it may be much more in ours, wherein the Orators known Exclamation of *O Tempora! O Mores!* may be juſtly renewed. O the Times we are fallen into! O the Manners of the Men we converſe with!

And now may I not add in the *ſecond Place*, That our Times have been and are *Evil*, in reſpect of *Danger*, and *outward Calamities?* We have had the *Sword*, *Plague*, and *Fire*; our Cure hath been attempted by *Inciſions*, *Mortifications*, and *Cauſticks.* We have at preſent potent Enemies Abroad, and great Diviſions at Home, with other Circumſtances which are no leſs ominous and dangerous; but I will not inſiſt on theſe, becauſe they are but the Effects of thoſe *crying Sins* which we labour under, mention'd before. *Theſe* are the Source of all our paſt and preſent Miſeries, and theſe threaten us with greater Judgments yet to come. Theſe are more boding and preſaging than all our Tempeſts and Hurricanes; theſe are more ominous and portentous than all the Comets that ever were ſeen to blaze in the Heavens. Theſe two go together, Vice and Calamity: A ſinful Age is a perilous Age.

See then, and be ſenſible how *evil* the Times are in reſpect of Sin, in regard of thoſe exorbitant Vices and outragious Enormities that are amongſt us. In this unreſtrain'd licentious Age, our Diſtempers are gone ſo far, our Diſeaſes and Maladies have ſo over-ſpread us, that (as * one ſaid in the like caſe) we are able neither to bear our Vices nor our Remedies. Our Condition is ſuch, that it is in itſelf Deſtructive, and yet our Folly and Madneſs is of that nature, that we will not conſent to be cured.

In this deſperate State, that which I would adviſe is this, that the Body of the People of this Land would but be perſwaded to this only, namely, to *ſee* that they are diſtemper'd and out of Order; that a dangerous Malady grows upon them, and that they nouriſh a Diſeaſe which will prove mortal if it be not look'd to in Time. I only beſeech *a diſeas'd People and Nation* to believe that they *really are ſo*, that their Sins are great and heinous, that the Voice of them hath reach'd up to Heaven, and that the Voice of the Almighty may be heard from thence alſo, crying aloud in our Ears, and calling us to repent and turn from our evil Ways, that Iniquity may not be our Ruin. Whilſt ſome Mens Mouths are full of Complaints and Murmurings againſt the Times, as *difficult* and *dangerous*; my requeſt to you is, that you would be apprehenſive of this, that the Days are *Evil* in Reſpect of *Sin* and *Vice*: This is that which you ought *chiefly* to conſider, and to employ your Thoughts about.

And let your ſerious Conſideration of this, produce in you theſe following Effects;

1. So take notice of the wicked Lives and Manners of the World, as really to lay them to Heart, and to mourn and grieve for them. Lament the Sins of the Place and Times where you live. Weep in ſecret for the crying Abominations

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* *Grotius, Hammond.*

* Ut jam nec vitia noſtra, nec remedia pati poſſimus. *Eraſm. Epiſt.* 58. *lib.* 31.

tions which are publickly committed: Let Rivers of Waters run down your Eyes, becauſe Men keep not God's Laws. Since you cannot but ſee the Wickedneſs that is committed in the World, behold it with Tears. I have given you a ſhort Character of the corrupt and degenerate Age we are fallen into. Chriſtians are turn'd Pagans; nay, Chriſtians are now daily guilty of thoſe Immoralities which the better ſort of Heathens abhorr'd. Can you ſee this, and not grieve and lament? Can you obſerve how Iniquity abounds, and how God is offended and provoked by it, and yet not humble your ſelves before him? Stay not for a Day of ſolemn Faſting. The ſinfulneſs of the Times calls for *preſent* Humiliation; this proclaims a Faſt; this invites you to mourn and lament. Proſtrate your ſelves before the Almighty, and heartily *bewail* the Sins of the People of this Land, and the rather, becauſe they do not *this* themſelves.

2. Be not ſilent, but reprove Sin and rebuke Sinners. Bear up againſt the Deluge of Atheiſm and Irreligion, which hath broken in upon this Nation, and hath over-run ſo great a Part of it. Appear againſt Debauchery and Prophaneneſs, which undermine and utterly deſtroy the Practice of Chriſtianity. Let it be ſeen that you dare reſiſt and oppoſe the moſt applauded Crimes, and that you are not afraid to cry down thoſe Vices which are moſt in Requeſt.

3. Plead for Religion; aſſert and defend it againſt thoſe who villify it, and endeavour to blaſt it by their malicious Invectives. Verify what our Saviour ſaid, that *Wiſdom is juſtified of her Children.* Stand up and *be valiant for the Truth upon Earth*; maintain the Cauſe of Religion, and think it honourable to be its Defender and Advocate, its Patron and Champion.

4. OFTEN implore the Divine Aſſiſtance, pray to be directed, beg to be preſerv'd blameleſs in the midſt of many and vile Sinners, in a World which is ſo corrupted and debauch'd.

5. EXHORT one another to Holineſs and ſtrictneſs of Life; ſtrengthen one another in Religion. When you ſee ſo many carried away with the Vices of the Age, endeavour by your frequent Admonitions to hinder others from that Contagion.

6. AGREE, unite, love one another: This the Primitive Chriſtians did in thoſe Times which they found ſo evil and perilous; and this you muſt do, and thereby adorn the Goſpel of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

Laſtly, AND which is the ſum of all, keep your ſelves pure from the Sins of the Times; have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs; live circumſpectly and exactly; redeem the Time; reform your Lives. Be not by Frowns or Flatteries tempted to comply with the evil Guiſe of the World, and to do any Thing unworthy of your Profeſſion. Be not led by Cuſtom or Faſhion to any known Vice; make no Man's Example a motive to Sin. But let this be your Rule, to be Good in evil Times, yea, to be beſt in the worſt Times. Remember and imitate *Joſhua*'s pious Reſolve; that * *as for him and his Houſe they will ſerve the Lord*, when he ſaw ſeveral were turning to the Idolatry of the Heathens. *Follow not a Multitude to do Evil.* The worſer the World is, the ſtricter let your Lives be: The more wicked the Times are, the more diligent and faithful be you in your ſeveral Callings and Stations; the more frequent and ardent in your Addreſſes to God, the more juſt and charitable in your Deportment towards Men, and the more conſcientious in all the Actions of your Lives.

THUS you may *ſave your ſelves from this untoward Generation*; you may be ſecure, whatever becomes of the impenitent Sinners of this Age. In fine, your living holy and exemplary Lives, your faithful diſcharging of your Duty, your keeping good Conſciences, and acting like ſincere Chriſtians, will prove not only beneficial to your ſelves, but God may thereby be prevail'd with to divert his Judgments from the Publick, and you may derive a Bleſſing on the whole Nation.

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* Joſ. xxiv. 15

The Duties of thoſe that have the Charge of Families.

To which is ADJOIN'D, A

DISCOURSE
ON
[Remember now thy Creator, &c.]

JOSHUA xxiv. 15. the latter part of the verſe.

But as for me and my Houſe, we will ſerve the Lord.

JOSHUA the great Leader and renowned Commander of the *Jewiſh* People, being grown aged, [as you read in the firſt *Verſe* of the twenty third *Chap.*] ſummon'd all the Tribes of *Iſrael* to come and hear his laſt and dying Words to them; in which, 1ſt. He commemorates the divine Favours and Bleſſings vouchſafed to them, and intermixes here and there Promiſes and Threatnings, to prevail with them the more effectually; [as you read in the twenty third *Chapter*, and in the beginning of this.] 2dly. He exhorts them to a ſincere and entire walking before God all their Lives, without the leaſt revolting to their former idolatrous Practices. [*Now therefore fear the Lord, and ſerve him in Sincerity and in Truth, and put away the gods which your Fathers ſerv'd, and ſerve the Lord*, v. 14. of this *Chap.*] And, 3dly. He renews the Covenant between God and the *Iſraelites*, [as you read from the 14th *v.* to the 26th.] And to confirm and eſtabliſh them in the way of Religion, he puts them, Firſt, upon their free Choice; he would have them embrace the Worſhip and Service of God upon deliberate and ſerious Thoughts, and after a due Conſideration and weighing of Things, to arrive at laſt to full purpoſes and reſolves of adhering to the Ways or God. [*If it ſeem evil unto you to ſerve the Lord, chuſe you this Day whom ye will ſerve; whether the gods which your Fathers ſerv'd, that were on the other ſide of the Flood, or the Gods of the Amorites in whoſe Land ye dwell.*] Not that *Joſhua* (by thus ſpeaking) leaves them altogether to their Liberty, or that he diſcharges them of their Obligation to ſerve God; but by this Propoſal he intends to try them, *viz.* whether they will fall off unto the *Gentile* Idolatry and Superſtition, or whether they will freely and voluntarily devote themſelves to the Service of the true God. And that this good Man and righteous Governor might animate and encourage this numerous People to perſevere in the latter; he propounds his own Example, and that of his Family likewiſe, [*As for me and my Houſe, we will ſerve the Lord.*]

THESE Words then are *Joſhua*'s brave and undaunted Reſolution concerning himſelf, and thoſe that were his proper Charge, touching his own Perſon and his Relations. We may obſerve in them theſe two remarkable Things; Firſt the main Subſtance of them, or the matter reſolved upon, and that is [ſerving the Lord.] Secondly, The latitude and extent of the Reſolution, [*As for me and my Houſe, we will* —] According to the ſeveral Aſpects of which Words, you may conſider, 1ſt. The Partition. 2dly. The Connexion. 3dly. The Order. 4thly. The Oppoſition that are obſervable in theſe Words.

First, I SAY obſerve the Partition, or Diſtinction in them, [*I and my Houſe.*] Religion and the Service of God are to be promoted both in our perſonal and relative Capacity: An implicit Faith or Religion are no way allowable. The Maſter of a Family, and thoſe that are committed to his Charge, are diſtinct. The Houſhold ſhall not be ſaved by their Maſter's Faith and Profeſſion. Every individual Perſon in that Family muſt ſerve God for himſelf. Every one muſt have a Belief and Practice of his own; every Soul for itſelf muſt ſerve the Lord.

Secondly, MARK the Connexion and Conjunction of the Words [*As for me and my Houſe*] O how good and pleaſant, how lovely and delectable is it for the Maſter and his Family to join together in the Service of God! When he can ſincerely ſay, I and the Children whom thou haſt given me, I and the Servants whom thou haſt placed under me, I and the Perſons who are committed to my Care, are careful to ſerve and honour thee the great *Jehovah*: That you may be able to ſay ſo, is the Deſign of the Diſcourſe which I ſhall preſent you with from this Text. And when your Forces are thus united, they muſt be the ſtronger, as well as the comelier.

Thirdly, CONSIDER the Order of the Parts of the Text [*I*, and then *my Houſe.*] He reſolves, firſt for himſelf, and then in behalf of his Houſhold. How great an Influence hath the Parent or Maſter's Example upon all thoſe who are under their Tuition? In vain do you expect your Family to be Holy and Pious, when you your ſelves are looſe and licentious, See that you go before 'em in the diſcharge of a good Conſcience, and in the Performance of all godly Actions, and then (if ever) it is probable they will follow after you. Be a Pattern to your Children and Servants in all Things that are Religious and Virtuous; and it is likely that they will be deſirous to imitate you. It was well ſaid of that great Orator and Moraliſt, (ſpeaking of the true Method of bringing Youth into the Ways of Virtue and good Behaviour) * Turn them (ſaith he) into the Path of Virtue, not only by admoniſhing and exhorting, by praiſing and commending, but by ſhewing them what manner of Perſons good Men are, by your Practice and Example. Firſt ſerve God thy ſelf, and then thy Family will be engaged to do the ſame. The *Order* is obſervable, *I and my Houſe.*

Fourthly and Laſtly, HERE is obſervable the Antitheſis or Oppoſition of the Words expreſs'd in the firſt Particle [But.] Chuſe you now (ſaith *Joſhua*) whom ye will ſerve, the gods of *Babylon*, or the *Amorites*: If you are reſolv'd to addict your ſelves to Idolatry; if this be your firm and obſtinate Purpoſe, I muſt leave you to your ſelves, tho' with unſpeakable Sorrow and Regret: But, let me tell you, your Practice ſhall not influence at all upon me or mine; notwithſtanding your ill Behaviour, *we* will do what is our proper Duty, and *we* will perſevere in it with all Zeal and Vigour. So *our* Language muſt be like this of *Joſhua*; let others do as they pleaſe; (if they are reſolv'd upon it) let them walk in the Sight of their Eyes, and in the Luſt of their Hearts; let them be guided by corrupt Principles, by vain Cuſtom, by vicious Education, or by wicked Example; as for me I have learnt otherwiſe; I will renounce all ungodly Principles and Practices, and I will addict my ſelf to the Service of God, and I will take Care that my Houſe and Family ſhall be devoted unto the ſame.

THE Words then reſolve themſelves naturally into theſe three Propoſitions, 1ſt. It ought to be the ſincere Reſolution, and the particular Endeavour and Study of every Soul to ſerve the Lord. As for me, I will make it my own *particular* Concern, tho' others ſhould be wholly averſe from it. 2dly. It is the Duty, and ſhould be the Reſolve and conſtant Practice of thoſe who have the Charge of Families, to promote the Service of God among them, to ſee that they as well as themſelves mind the great Work of Religion: *As for me and my Houſe, we will ſerve the Lord.* 3dly. This Reſolution of ſerving God muſt be taken up, and the Practice of it obſerv'd, notwithſtanding the indifferency and neutrality, nay, maugre all the Prophaneneſs and Irreligion of our Neighbours. Their neglect of this Duty muſt not diſcourage and deaden us. But as for me (ſaith *Joſhua*) I will engage my ſelf and my Relations in this indiſpenſible Buſineſs, altho' I ſee the greateſt Numbers of you embrace the contrary. However *you* deport your ſelves, Religion ſhall be the Care of *me* and my *Family*,

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* Προτρέπετε τοὺς νεωτέρους ἐπ' ἀρετὴν; μὴ μόνον παραινοῦντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ τὰς πράξεις ἐπιδεικνύοντες ὁποίους εἶναι χρὴ ἄνδρας τοὺς ἀγαθούς. *Iſocrates ad Nicoclem.*

I WILL wave the firſt and the laſt Propoſition, and wholly confine my ſelf to the middle one, becauſe I deſign this plain Diſcourſe for Houſholders, and ſuch whom God hath either bleſſed with Children, or entruſted with Servants, or both. But I hope it will be of ſingular Uſe to you all, (as you will find from the rehearſal of the ſeveral Particulars;) for tho' the whole managing of this Doctrine doth not ſo nearly concern ſome of you at the preſent, yet if you pleaſe to lay up the enſuing Heads in your Memories, you may find 'em hereafter very ſerviceable to you, if by God's Providence you ſhall make ſome Alteration in your Condition, and intereſt your ſelves in the Affairs of a Family. Here is propounded in the Text, ſaith a very ſubſtantial * Expoſitor on the Words, *an Example of governing a Family*; wherefore the main Thing I intend is, to ſhew you *how* this is to be done; *how* Parents and Governors of Families may rightly diſcharge their Duty; *how* they may cheriſh Religion and the fear of God amongſt thoſe who live with them, and are daily under their Tuition. To give you full Satisfaction as to this weighty matter, I offer to you theſe following Directions.

* Maſius in Loc.

1. TAKE care that your Children be admitted into the Church by Chriſtian Baptiſm. This is the Door they muſt enter in at, or elſe there will be no Admiſſion into the Houſe of God here, or into the Kingdom of Heaven hereafter. *Except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*, John iii. 5. Which Words of our Saviour may be underſtood in both thoſe Senſes, that is, unleſs we be regenerated by Baptiſm, (which is there called the *waſhing of Regeneration)* we can neither be received into the Church of Chriſt here, nor be Partakers afterwards of the Happineſs of Heaven. Not that we are (with one of the Antients) to pronounce all Children damn'd that are not baptiz'd. This is as groundleſs as it is uncharitable. For this is certain, that no Infant ſhall ſuffer for the Parents wilful neglect of having Baptiſm adminiſtred to it. Thoſe of you that have look'd into Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory have inform'd yourſelves, that it was uſual heretofore to defer Baptiſm till the Parties arriv'd at a conſiderable Age. *Conſtantine* the Great, and ſome of the moſt eminent Perſons in the Primitive Churches did not partake of this Sacrament till towards the latter end of their Lives. I will not trouble you now with the Reaſons which they aſſign'd for this Practice; but it is enough that it was matter of Fact. Whence we may gather that the *Anabaptiſts* (as they are uſually call'd, but very improperly) are not ſuch grievous Hereticks as they are generally thought to be; for they do the very ſame that many of the Primitive Chriſtians did, that is, they baptize not any Perſons while they are Children, but delay that Sacrament till they come to be adult, that is, of ſufficient Age to underſtand what they do. They do not *deny* the Sacrament, but only *defer* it, and herein they have ſeveral of the antient Chriſtians for their Corpurgators. This mitigates their Fault, but it doth not wholly excuſe it: For ſeeing *Infants* and *little Children* are capable now of being admitted into the Church, no leſs than the *Jewiſh* Children were by the Sacrament of Circumciſion, we have reaſon to admit them betimes into the Church of Chriſt by the evangelical Sacrament of Baptiſm.

WHEREFORE you that are Parents, muſt needs think it to be a Task incumbent on you to bring your Children to the ſacred Font, and to initiate them into the Congregation of Chriſtian People by this holy Ordinance. The Practice of the firſt and early Converts of the Church will convince you of the Neceſſity of this. They took care to have their Families baptiz'd as well as themſelves. Thus concerning that eminent Convert *Lydia*, it is recorded, that *ſhe was baptiz'd and her Houſhold*, Acts xvi. 15. And it is expreſly ſaid of the converted *Jailor that he was baptiz'd, he and all his*, ver. 33. Forget not then the

Primitive Uſage of the Chriſtian Church, founded on that Commiſſion given by Chriſt to his Apoſtles; *Go and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghoſt*, Mat. xviii. 19. Dedicate your Children to God by the celebrating of this evangelical Inſtitution.

And do it with ſeriouſneſs and gravity, and not in a light and ſuperficial manner, as if it were only a cuſtomary thing, which is the too common Practice of moſt Perſons. You ſhould be ſenſible how ſacred and ſolemn a thing it is to bring your Children to receive this Sacrament. And thoſe that are Sponſors and Sureties, (whom we ordinarily call God-fathers and God-mothers) ſhould ſeriouſly conſider what they undertake, when they appear in that Capacity, or elſe their anſwering for the Infant is but a mocking of God, and a playing and ſporting with the moſt ſacred Things. I beſeech all of you, that at any time are concern'd in this important Undertaking, that you do not provoke Heaven by your prophaning of holy Things, and thereby bring down a Curſe upon thoſe Children whom you intended to have a Bleſſing conferr'd upon.

2. Instruct your Children and one another in the Principles of Chriſtianity. It ſhould be the buſineſs of a Family to advance a mutual Inſtruction, and to make one another more knowing in Religion. And truly this is more eſpecially neceſſary to be done by Parents, and thoſe that are the conſiderable Perſons in a Family, becauſe otherwiſe they will not be able to communicate Knowledge to thoſe that are under them. They ought then to be ſollicitous to furniſh themſelves with divine Knowledge, that they may be in a capacity to teach others. Wherefore that is the next thing you are to do, as you are Parents and Maſters, namely, to train up the younger Sort in the Principles of Chriſtianity, to inform your Children and Servants in the neceſſary Points of Religion: Such as theſe, that there is a God, that is, that there is a Being of infinite Perfection, who is the Maker and Governor of all Things, on whom we all depend, and from whom we receive all the good Things which relate either to this Life or another: That our firſt Parents *Adam* and *Eve* tranſgreſſed the divine Commandment, and thereby involv'd us and all their Poſterity in Sin and Guilt: That when Mankind was thus fallen into a wretched and miſerable Condition, God was pleas'd to promiſe, and at laſt in the fulneſs of Time ſent his only begotton Son, to redeem and ſave all thoſe who believe in him: That this bleſſed Redeemer took upon him our humane Nature, and ſuffer'd Death upon the Croſs, and by the all-ſufficient Merit of his Sufferings obtain'd for us the Pardon and Remiſſion of our Sins, and purchas'd for us eternal Life and Happineſs: That the Conditions or Qualifications requir'd on our part are Faith and Repentance, and new Obedience: That theſe Qualifications which fit us for everlaſting Happineſs are wrought and produc'd in us by the holy Spirit, and are not the Effects of our natural Power and Ability: That this bleſſed and merciful Saviour roſe again from the Dead, and aſcended into Heaven, and there ſits at the right Hand of his Father, making Interceſſion for us: That this Jeſus ſhall be the Judge of the whole World, and that in order to the laſt Judgment we ſhall all riſe again with our own Bodies, and ſtand before that great Tribunal: That according to the Sentence which ſhall then proceed from his Mouth, the final and eternal State of every Man ſhall be determin'd: That the wicked ſhall be doom'd to everlaſting Fire, and the righteous to everlaſting Life and Bliſs. Thus let your Children and Charge be acquainted betimes what their Religion means, and what are the chief Ingredients of it.

And it would be requiſite, in order to your conſcientious Diſcharge of this Task, that you throughly perſwade your ſelves that Knowledge is the Foundation of Religion, and that it is impoſſible for any one to be a good Chriſtian if he be ignorant of the Truths of the Goſpel. It is a great Miſtake among People, and even among ſome that are not of the vulgar ſort, that if they do things honeſt and juſt, and lead civil and moral Lives, they ſhall be accepted of God, tho' they are unacquainted with the Principles of the Chriſtian Religion, and are very ignorant of the great Truths of the Goſpel. This, I ſay, is a very groſs Miſtake, and deſtroys many Souls; for Knowledge is abſolutely requiſite to a righteous and godly Practice. He that doth not act upon Principles is no true Chriſtian. Conſider and weigh this well, and then you will be convinced of the neceſſity of laying the Foundation aright, of inſtructing your Charge in the Doctrines of the Chriſtian Faith, of grounding them in the ſubſtantial Principles of their Profeſſion.

3. INSTRUCT them in the *practical* Part of Chriſtianity; for Knowledge (which I ſpoke of before) is deſigned in order to Practice. Therefore thoſe of you who have the Government of a Family are chiefly to be concern'd that thoſe who are under you, reduce all their Knowledge into Action, and ſhew the Virtue of their Principles in their Lives and Manners. As for Example, the Knowledge of the Being of God (the Almighty Creator and Diſpoſer of all Things) muſt exert it ſelf in Practice; that is, we ought to pay the utmoſt Reverence, Love, Obedience and Homage to him, in whom we live and move, and have our Being, and from whoſe bountiful Hand we are ſupplied with all our good Things. Again, the Knowledge of our original Depravity and Corruption, caus'd by the Fall of our firſt Parents from God and Happineſs, ſhould have this good Effect upon us, namely, to beget a profound Humility in us, and to make us continually live in a ſenſe of our natural Weakneſs and Inability, and to depend entirely upon God for his Aid and Aſſiſtance. So again, the Doctrine of Chriſt's redeeming us ſhould be efficacious in our Lives, and cauſe us to do and ſuffer any Thing for that Jeſus, who by his meritorious Undertakings, and dying an accurſed Death for us, put us into a ſtate of Life and Bleſſedneſs. Further, I will inſtance in that neceſſary Doctrine of Chriſtianity, the coming of Chriſt to Judgment; what a mighty Influence ſhould this have on our Thoughts, Words and Actions? Seeing we muſt one Day be call'd to a ſtrict Account for all that we have ſaid, thought, and done; *What manner of Perſons ought we to be in all holy Converſation and Godlineſs, looking for and haſting to the coming of the Day of God, wherein the Heavens being on Fire ſhall be diſſolved, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent Heat?* 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12. I will inſtance in one Principle more, and that is concerning the Rewards and Puniſhments in another World, than which nothing is more evident in Scripture. This part of divine Knowledge muſt tend to and end in a ſuitable Practice, or elſe it is of no Uſe; and truly it naturally tends to that End, for if there be a Heaven and a Hell, and that of eternal Duration, to recompence the Righteous for their good Actions, and to puniſh the Wicked for their evil ones; then certainly the ſerious Conſideration of this will powerfully excite us to a religious and conſcientious Walking before God; becauſe without Holineſs none ſhall ſee him in Glory, and for the want of Holineſs (and that only) Perſons ſhall be eternally excluded from that Glory and Happineſs.

THUS in brief I have let you ſee that the *practical* Part of Chriſtianity is aim'd at and deſign'd in the very *Principles* of it; and therefore thoſe that have the Charge of Families muſt not content themſelves with inſtructing their Children and Servants in theſe Principles; but they muſt proceed further. They muſt not reſt in the bare Truths of Religion, but they ought to advance further, and to make them ſerviceable to the actual Production of all Vertues and Graces, and the viſible Performance of all Duties requir'd by Chriſtianity. You muſt ſet before your Charge, as matter of their Practice, all the ſeveral Parts and Branches of the Chriſtian Laws. You muſt acquaint them in the firſt place what is their peculiar Duty towards *God*; what are thoſe *inward* and mental Acts of Devotion which are requir'd of them, ſuch as theſe, exerciſing our Faith, our Hope, and our Truſt in him, fearing and reverencing him above all, admiring and loving him, not only for his Goodneſs to us, but for his own matchleſs Excellencies and Perfections. They muſt alſo be taught what are the *external* Acts of Honour and Worſhip, namely, fervent Prayer, attentive Hearing of the Word, partaking of the holy Sacraments: And that they are to behave themſelves humbly, reverently and devoutly when they approach to God in any of theſe Ordinances.

THEN in the next place, they muſt be inform'd concerning their proper and peculiar Duty towards their *Neighbours*; which conſiſts in Acts of Juſtice and Equity, of Truth and Faithfulneſs towards all we converſe with; of unfeign'd Love to our Brethren, and delighting to do charitable Offices to them. It conſiſts alſo in defending them from Oppreſſion and all Injuries, in aſſiſting them in their Diſtreſſes, in forgiving and paſſing by their Offences towards us, in relieving them in their Streights and Neceſſities; and in ſhort, in doing all the good we can to them, both in reſpect of their Bodies and their Souls.

There is likewiſe a particular and proper Duty owing to *our ſelves*: And that compriſes in it Meekneſs and Gentleneſs, Induſtry and Diligence, Moderation and Temperance, and a ſober Uſe of all the good Things of this Life, Continence and Chaſtity, and laſtly, Contentedneſs in the State that God hath placed us in. Thus *you and your Houſe*, you and thoſe that are committed to your Care, muſt *ſerve the Lord*: And thus you muſt *inſtruct* them how to ſerve Him.

4. You that are Governors of Families muſt *more eſpecially* inſtruct your ſelves, and thoſe of your Charge, in thoſe Duties which you and they owe to one another, as you are Members and Parts of a *Family*. There are the *peculiar Offices* of Husband and Wife, as alſo of Maſters and Parents: And there are the peculiar Duties of Children and Servants. If thoſe that are in the Married State would know what is particularly required of *them*, they may ſatisfy themſelves by conſulting ſuch Texts as theſe, *Husbands love your Wives, and be not bitter againſt them*, Col. iii. 19. *A Man ſhall leave his Father and Mother, and ſhall be joyn'd to his Wife, and they two ſhall be one Fleſh*, Eph. v. 31. Nay, to expreſs this conjugal Affection and Love to the utmoſt height, the Apoſtle had ſaid before, *Husbands love your Wives, even as Chriſt loved the Church*, Eph. v. 25. which was with an extraordinary and unparallel'd Love. On the other hand, Women may learn their particular Duty to their Husbands from *Col.* iii. 18. *Wives ſubmit your ſelves to your own Husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.* And from 2 *Tit.* iv. 5. where they are bid *to love their Husbands, to be diſcreet, chaſte, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own Husbands.* Children have their proper Leſſon ſet them, *Eph.* vi. 1. *Children, obey your Parents in the Lord*: And again, *Children, obey your Parents in all Things*, Col. iii. 20. Parents have their Duty preſcrib'd them, as well as their Children; which is briefly ſumm'd up in thoſe Words of the Apoſtle, *Fathers, provoke not your Children to Wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, Eph. vi. 4. You that are in the Condition of Servants, have your peculiar Task alloted you in *Eph.* vi. 5, 6. *Servants be obedient to them that are your Maſters, with fear and trembling, in ſingleneſs of your hearts, as unto Chriſt: not with eye-ſervice, as men-pleaſers, but as the ſervants of Chriſt, doing the Will of God from the Heart.* And you that have the Dignity and Privilege of being *Maſters*, have your Office and Duty particularly aſſign'd you by the ſame Apoſtle, and in the ſame place; *Ye Maſters, do the ſame things unto them* (that is, after the ſame manner, namely, *as to Chriſt*, ſo as to approve your ſelves to him) *forbearing threatning*, that is, all harſh and rigid treating of them, *knowing that your Maſter alſo is in heaven, neither is there reſpect of Perſons with him.* Thus you are to acquaint both yourſelves and your Charge with the particular Duties which relate to your ſeveral diſtinct Conditions and Capacities.

5. It is not ſufficient that thoſe who have the care of Families inſtruct the Members of it in their Duty, but it is moreover requir'd that they *excite* them to the Diſcharge and Performance of it. For we find that there is a natural Proſpenſity in all Perſons to forget and neglect what is enjoyn'd them. They are very backward to ſet about their proper Work and Buſineſs; they are too much inclin'd to do any thing rather than this. Wherefore there is a neceſſity of urging this Head of my Diſcourſe. It is indiſpenſably requiſite, that you call upon your Children and Family to be diligent in their Duty, to live and act according to thoſe Inſtructions that you have inſtill'd into them. You muſt labour to cure their Forgetfulneſs, by often reminding them of putting in Practice what they know, and what they have been taught. You muſt endeavour to repair their Negligence and Sloth, by repreſenting to them the abſolute neceſſity of their attending to you, and acting according to what you ſuggeſt to them. You muſt frequently *inculcate* and *repeat* your Admonitions, your Counſels, your Advice: and to make them effectual, it will be requiſite that you cheriſh their Endeavours by ſome encouraging Promiſes. If the God of Heaven hath thought fit to promote the Practice of Holineſs by the Propoſal of Rewards; ſurely, then it will not be improper for Parents and Guides of Families to imitate him in this Kind, and thereby to ſtir up and provoke their Children to what is religious and holy, and as it were to *bribe* them to vertuous Actions, and a praiſe-worthy Behaviour.

6. It is not enough to excite and encourage them, and when there is fit occaſion, to reward them; but you muſt *Reprove* them when they do amiſs. This is as neceſſary as the other; for Vice is thought to be encourag'd, when it is not check'd and rebuk'd: And thence it increaſes and gathers Strength. Therefore here you muſt be very mindful of your Duty, or otherwiſe the Diſorders and Miſcarriages of your Family will be multiply'd. Be continually reproving of Sin, wherever you find it: And if there be need of it, ſharply animadvert upon it, and correct and puniſh it. *I will ſing of Mercy and Judgment*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* ci. 1. that is, I will diſcourſe of *Reward* to the good and obedient Perſons in my Family, and of *Puniſhment* to thoſe that behave themſelves wickedly there. For this Pſalm (as I ſhall more largely ſhew you afterwards) treats of Family-Reformation. If you would to Purpoſe reform your Families, you muſt not forget to create a dread of Sin in your Children and Servants. You muſt frown them out of their Faults, you muſt threaten them out of Vice. But it will be objected, that this is againſt the Apoſtolical Precept before-mention'd, *viz.* that Maſters ſhould *forbear threatening*. I anſwer, That thoſe Words of the Apoſtle do not forbid and condemn all *Threatning*, but only ſuch as is without juſt Cauſe, and upon ſlight Occaſions, and ſuch as proceeds from Wrath and Paſſion, and argues Severity and Cruelty, and is the Effect of a domineering Temper. Such *Menacing* as this is unlawful and ſinful, and is therefore prohibited. But to brow-beat all Vice and Immorality, to threaten theſe out of your Children and Servants, and forcibly to expel them out of your Families by Puniſhment and Severity, is ſo far from being forbidden and diſallow'd, that it is requir'd of you: And let me tell you, this will be the beſt way to ſhew your *Dominion*, and to exert that *Superiority* which God hath given you within your own Walls.

7. HAVING directed you to the inſtructing of your Families in the Principles and Grounds of Religion, and in the Duties that reſpect Practice, eſpecially thoſe towards yourſelves and one another; and having adviſed you to back theſe Inſtructions with the moſt ſkilful Excitements, with the moſt winning Encouragements, and with Reproofs and Severities when there is occaſion: My next Direction is, that you would intermix all with fervent and devout *Prayer*. For *this* is effectual towards all that hath been ſaid before; without this, your repeated Inſtructions, your pathetic Exhortations, your diſcreet Propoſals of Reward, and your ſharpeſt Rebukes, will be to little purpoſe. You muſt remember then what the Apoſtle ſaith, * *Every thing is ſanctified by the Word of God*, (*i. e.* his Bleſſing) and *Prayer*, which fetches down the Bleſſing from Heaven. In a more eſpecial manner the *Domeſtic* Concerns are ſanctified by Prayer, and they can be proſper'd by no other way than this. Which I conceive is the meaning of the firſt verſe of Pſalm cxxvii. *Except the Lord build the Houſe, they labour in vain that build it.* By *building the Houſe* (as I could prove to you from the Stile of the *Hebrews*, if I had time) is meant the increaſing of the Family, and the flouriſhing of it. The *Houſhold* Affairs are ſucceeded and proſper'd by the divine Bleſſing upon them, no leſs than the *public* Affairs of a Nation, or a *City* are: Wherefore it follows immediately in the fore-mention'd Pſalm, *Except the Lord keep the City the Watchmen waketh but in vain.* Which Words have reference, as I apprehend, to the State of the Community or Commonwealth, the Succeſs of which depends on the Favour and Bleſſing of the Almighty. Being throughly perſwaded of this, betake yourſelves to the Throne of Grace, humbly ſupplicate and implore the divine Aſſiſtance; for except *the Lord build your Houſe*, i. e. rear up and ſupport, and then preſerve and proſper your Family, it will ſink and decay. Unleſs he give a Bleſſing to your Inſtructions and Exhortations, and all your other Endeavours, they will be wholly inſignificant, and your Children and Servants will have no real Good and Benefit by them.

* 1 Tim. iv. 5.

BUT *more particularly* to inſiſt upon this Office of Prayer.

Firſt, YOU that are Heads of Families, and have Children or Servants under your Tuition, muſt lead them the Way to the Throne of Grace by interceeding daily for *them*. You muſt with great earneſtneſs beg of God that he would vouchſafe his Grace and good Spirit to them, to enable them to do what he, and what you require of them.

Secondly, As you that are Parents and Maſters of Families ought to pray for your Children and Servants, ſo you muſt enjoin them to pray for *you*, to beg of Almighty God that he would vouchſafe to make you the happy Inſtruments of their Good and Welfare, both here and hereafter.

AND alſo they are to return Thanks to the Author of all Mercies, that they have been bleſs'd with Maſters and Parents that have taken care of them, and ſhew'd a tender Regard to them, and have conſulted the good of their Souls as well as their Bodies.

Thirdly, REMIND them to pray for *themſelves*. And to further them in this good Work, you ought to furniſh them with ſome brief Manual of Devotion, which contains Prayers that are proper for their Circumſtances; and if any of you want my Help herein, I ſhall be ready to adviſe and aſſiſt you; or you may give them the general Heads which are to be the matter of their Petitions: You muſt let them know that they ought firſt to pray for divine Grace, and all ſpiritual Gifts and Endowments; for Faith and Love, Meekneſs and Patience, Sincerity and Uprightneſs, Humility, Sobriety, Reſignation to the divine Will, and all other Virtues that adorn the Life of a Chriſtian. They muſt beg for Help to diſcharge with all Faithfulneſs, the particular Duties which they owe to their Parents and Superiors, and all that they converſe with in the Family. They muſt alſo crave their daily Bread, that is, what is neceſſary and convenient for them, as to their Bodies and temporal Concerns. They muſt earneſtly deſire that they may have Skill and Ability to uſe the good Things of this World with Moderation and Thankfulneſs, and with hearty Intentions to glorify God by them.

MOREOVER, they muſt be reminded to praiſe and extol the ſingular Bounty of God to them, in his conferring ſo many and ſo great Favours upon them thro' their whole Lives: They muſt thankfully own his Goodneſs in every particular Kindneſs and Mercy which they have ſhare in, and this muſt be done every Day of their Lives.

BESIDES, to theſe Thankſgivings and Petitions, there muſt be added penitential Confeſſions; for as they are daily ſinning, ſo it is fit they ſhould acknowledge it, and with mournful Hearts lay open before the Almighty their ſpiritual Maladies and Infirmities, and with Shame and Sorrow confeſs their Folly, their Guilt, and their Obnoxiouſneſs to the Divine Wrath and Diſpleaſure. Thus Parents and Children, Maſters and Servants mutually praying for each other, and for themſelves, will thereby derive Bleſſings and Mercies on one another's Heads.

BUT hitherto I have ſpoken of Prayer in Secret, which muſt conſtantly be performed by every Perſon of the Family, that is capable of it. They muſt all pray alone by themſelves, they muſt adore God in their Cloſet-Devotions. When no Eye ſees them, or Ear hears them, they muſt be fervent in their Addreſſes to Heaven, and pour out their Souls before the Almighty. And to encourage this ſecret and retir'd Devotion, our Saviour hath aſſured them that *their Father who ſeeth in Secret*, *i. e.* takes notice of what they do in their Cloſets and Retirements, *will reward them openly*, Mat. vi. 6. Let no Perſon then that hears me this Day neglect his private Praying to God. Thoſe of you that get your Livelihood by your Labour, and the Work of your Hands, may not be expected to frequent the publick Devotions on ordinary Days of the Week; but there can be no excuſe for your neglecting your ſecret Devotions: Some part of the Day will afford you a Seaſon for this; when you riſe, or when you are repairing to your Reſt; yea, even your Beds may be turn'd into Oratories and Chapels, if you have no other Place or Time afforded you. Remember this I intreat you, to perform this Duty of Prayer in your Retirements, for this will be the greateſt Teſtimony to you that your Devotion is ſincere: For ſome may pray in Publick out of certain ſiniſter Deſigns, and for Oſtentation, but none ever addicted himſelf to ſecret Prayer, that was not truly and ſincerely Pious. This I hope will invite you to apply your ſelves to this Duty for the future, tho' you have formerly neglected it.

Fourthly, As you muſt pray aſunder, ſo you are obliged to pray together; and there is not the pooreſt and meaneſt Houſholder among you, but is to take care of this: For nothing is more reaſonable than this, that Religion ſhould be the joint Buſineſs of the whole Houſe; that all the Members of it ſhould ſerve and worſhip God in Conſort. Indeed this is the natural Sentiment of all thoſe whoſe Minds are not utterly depraved and corrupted. Thus we read that *Micah* would by all means have a Houſe of gods, an *Ephod*, and a *Teraphim*, and a Prieſt, tho' they were of his own conſecrating. The Family was not thought to be in a right Poſture and Condition, unleſs Religion, (ſuch as 'twas) was maintain'd in it, and unleſs the Name of God was ſolemnly invoked. We read that the *Jews*, God's own People, and of whom he took ſpecial Care as to their Worſhip, were expreſly commanded to *dedicate their Houſes* as ſoon as they were built, or when they went firſt to dwell in them, *Deut.* xx. 5. and this dedicating or conſecrating of their Habitations was perform'd by *Prayer*. Let me tell you, this Dedication of Houſes is lawful under the Goſpel, as well as it was under the *Moſaic* Diſpenſation. Every Maſter of a Family muſt hallow it by Prayer, and that not only at his firſt Entring into his Habitation, but continually afterwards. He muſt turn his Houſe into a Temple, and always offer his Morning and Evening Sacrifice there. He muſt make his Houſe (as God ſtiled *his*) *the Houſe of Prayer*: This he muſt do by daily calling his Family together, and joining in their ardent and zealous imploring of the Divine Goodneſs. Let no Man profeſſing himſelf a Chriſtian, keep ſo heatheniſh a Family as not to ſee that God be daily worſhiped in it, and thereby the Spirit of Religion upheld among them: Perhaps ſome of you have not been plainly and roundly told theſe Things; but now for the time to come, your Omiſſion of them will be the more blameable, and render you the more guilty, becauſe I have been ſo free with you, and have laid your Duty before you with ſo much plainneſs.

Besides, I adviſe Parents and Maſters of Families to inure themſelves, and their Children and Servants, to this holy Duty and Exerciſe of Prayer at Home, that by that means they may be the fitter for the performing of this Duty in Publick. For this is a certain Truth, that unleſs you ſerve God in your Families, and pray unto him in private, you in vain pretend to ſerve and worſhip him in the publick Aſſemblies, for the one muſt be a Step to the other. Which brings me to the next Thing I am to adviſe you to.

Fifthly then, Remember to pray publickly in the Aſſemblies and Congregations of the Faithful. To this purpoſe you are to conſider, that as you profeſs your ſelves to be Chriſtians, you are Members of the myſtical Body of Chriſt, the Church; and conſequently being fellow Members, you muſt *communicate* with one another; you muſt aſſociate together; you muſt hold religious Commerce with one another; and accordingly you muſt unite in the ſame Devotions; you muſt with one Lip and with one Voice ſend up the ſame Prayers to Heaven; ſo that there is a neceſſity of publick Prayer, if we own that Article of the Creed, *the Communion of Saints*. Train up your Children then, as well as accuſtom your ſelves to the Devotion of the Church; all of you unanimouſly concur in putting up your Addreſſes to God in the ſolemn Aſſemblies, at the appointed Times of Worſhip.

Thus you ſee what is your Duty with relation to *Prayer*. There is required of you not only ſecret Devotion in your Cloſets, and private Prayer in your Families, but alſo that which is publick and more ſolemn, *viz.* in the Congregation. But this I would admoniſh you of again, (for you may remember I ſaid ſomething of it in my former Diſcourſe) that if you do not apply your ſelves to your private and ſecret Converſe with God at Home, all your Prayers at Church will ſignify nothing. The reaſon is plain, becauſe if you have any true and ſincere Devotion, you will expreſs and exerciſe it between God and your ſelves, and in your Families; and therefore where there is not this domeſtick and private Religion, it is a ſign that the repairing to the publick Service is but a ſhew and a pretence, and hath nothing of true and real Zeal in it. Wherefore, you that preſide over Houſholds, accuſtom your Charge to all kind of Prayer, to that of the Cloſet, to Family Devotions, and to thoſe of the Publick; and let me tell you, this is according to that Chriſtian *Exactneſs* which is required of you, of which I ſhall, God willing, give you an Account the next Lord's Day.

The next (which is the eighth Direction) is this, Bring up your Children and Servants to the reading and hearing of God's Word. *Wherewith ſhall a young Man cleanſe his Ways?* ſaith the Pſalmiſt: and the Anſwer follows, *By taking heed* *thereto according to thy Word.* The Philoſopher was of the Opinion, that young Men are not capable of Lectures of Morality, becauſe of their turbulent Paſſions which defile and corrupt their Minds. The Royal Prophet you ſee, was of another Judgment; he directs the *Young Man* to take heed of his Ways, and to cleanſe and purify them by conſulting the *Words*, i. e. the Law of God. This is it which will be a Light unto his Feet, and a Lanthorn unto his Path, to direct and conduct him to the ways of Holineſs and an upright Life. Take care that your Families be converſant in the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make them wiſe unto Salvation. Let the Word of God dwell plenteouſly in your Houſes, diſcovering to you your Duty here, and directing you to your Happineſs hereafter. Of all Books prize and value the Bible moſt, and train up your Children and Servants to the reading of it. Lay aſide your Romances and Novels, your Plays and your Farces, and betake your ſelves to uſeful and religious Authors; but above all ſtudy the Book of God, for this will teach you true Wiſdom: Beſides that there are in theſe Writings all ſorts of humane Learning, and therefore you of the Gown are to prize them upon that Account, as well as that which I have mention'd. I could make it as plain to you as any Demonſtration in *Euclid*, that the Bible hath all kinds of good Literature in it; that none can pretend to compleat Learning and Scholarſhip if he be not skill'd in the ſacred Writings. But I have done this fully in a juſt Diſcourſe, which ſome time ſince I preſum'd to preſent the learned World with.

AND as you muſt give attendance to *reading* (as the Apoſtle commands) ſo you muſt reckon it your Duty to bring your Family with you to *hear the Word of God preach'd*, expounded and applyed: This is no indifferent matter, which you may omit and neglect if you pleaſe; for this ſacred Ordinance is the appointment of the Goſpel, and was inſtituted on purpoſe to be the great Channel of Conveyance of Grace and the divine Spirit into the Hearts and Lives of Men. It was deſign'd to be *the Power of God unto Salvation*; and therefore if we deſpiſe this, we neglect our Salvation and Happineſs. You cannot therefore be excuſed from attending on the Word preach'd; and it is not enough that you come your ſelves, but you are obliged to take care that your Family bear you Company: If you leave them all at Home, and reſort unto the Aſſemblies in your own Perſons only, you have not compleated your Duty. All your Family that can be ſpared (when no neceſſary occaſions detain them) muſt at one Time or other repair to the publick Ordinances: If they cannot all appear together, let them come by turns. Think it not too much that all your Houſe ſhould ſerve the Lord; as you deſire the Converſion and Repentance of your Children and Servants, call upon them to hear Sermons; and to encourage them and your ſelves to this, be thoroughly perſwaded of this great Truth, that the Miniſter of Chriſt is God's Ambaſſador, he is ſent by him, and he ſpeaks in his Name. A Preacher (as well as a King) is God's Deputy and Vicegerent; he is commiſſion'd by him, he comes from him, and he acts in his room; and therefore (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *He that deſpiſeth him, deſpiſeth not Man, but God*, 1 Theſ. iv. 8. You have good Reaſon then to bring your Family to the Houſe of God, and uſe them to the Miniſtry of God's Word, and to ſee that they behave themſelves reverently and devoutly, that they hear with Attention and godly Fear.

YEA, I will add this, that tho' you obſerve that ſome of your Family ſlight and undervalue this and other Exerciſes of Religion, tho' they perform them with little or no Zeal and Devotion, yet ſtill uſe them daily to theſe Holy Duties, and by that means perhaps you will find, that thoſe Duties which are now ſlighted, or ſuperficially diſcharg'd, will afterwards be performed by them with a becoming Reverence, and with due Attention and Zeal. To this purpoſe I have met with a notable Paſſage in the *Jewiſh Talmud* (in that Diviſion of it which is called *Sota*,) namely that "A Man ought to be converſant always in "the Law, tho' he doth it not for the ſake of the Law and the Commandments; "for whilſt he doth this not for itſelf, at length it may come to paſs that he will "do it for the ſake of the Law and the Commandments." The very ſame may happen in the being converſant in the evangelick Law, and the ſeveral Duties of it. Whilſt your Children and Servants are buſied daily in the performance of them, they may find their Hearts and Conſciences affected; and tho' at firſt they were not engaged in thoſe religious Exerciſes for the Sake of the Goſpel, but upon ſiniſter Ends, yet they may at laſt arrive to a true Underſtanding of what they ought to do, and be employed in thoſe Duties for the love of them, and from a real Senſe of the Goodneſs and real Excellency that attend them. This I thought fit to add to what I ſaid before, that you may not be diſcourag'd from calling upon your Charge, to exerciſe themſelves daily in religious Duties.

My next (which is the ninth) Direction is this, make all yours obſerve the Chriſtian Sabbath, the Lord's Day; for the Fourth Commandment (as you may take notice) lays this Injunction upon *Maſters* and *Parents*, and *Governors of Families*; for no leſs is ſignified in theſe Words, *In it thou ſhalt do no manner of Work, Thou, nor thy Son, nor thy Daughter, thy Man Servant, nor thy Maid Servant.* Whence it is evident, that you are not only *your ſelves* to keep this Day Holy, but you are obliged to ſee it obſerved by all thoſe who are committed to your Truſt, your *Sons* and your *Daughters*, and your *Servants*. But do we not ſee the common Practice to be contrary to this? Do we not hear that ſome claim this Day to be theirs, as if it were no longer to be the Lord's-day? How many are walking this Day to the Fair merely for Pleaſure? And how many are idle or ill employ'd within Doors? How common among us is the Abuſe of this Day in impertinent Viſits, in gadding Abroad, or in ſitting or ſtanding at their Doors at Home, looking about them, or talking with their Neighbours, as if they had nothing elſe to do on this Holy Day? But I beſeech you be not guilty of this Prophanation, but reckon it your Duty and your Excellency to give Proof of your ſingular *Integrity* and Faithfulneſs in an Age that is ſo much corrupted by Atheiſm, Irreligion and Prophaneneſs.

Know this then, that tho' *every Day* muſt be dedicated to God's Service, yet *this* in a more eſpecial and ſolemn manner. If thoſe of your Family break *this* Commandment, it is no wonder that they break all the reſt. If you deny God the Time which he hath ſet apart for his Worſhip, it is not to be expected that you will ſpend the other Portions of Time well; nay, it is to be fear'd that you will ſpend them very ill: And this indeed is founded on long Experience, that the not obſerving of this Day is the inlet to all Prophaneneſs and Wickedneſs. It might be noted that this Commandment concerning the keeping of the Sabbath, is placed in the middle as it were of the reſt, to hint to us that *this* influences upon all the others, and that it is a great help towards the keeping of them. Be ſtudious then of celebrating this Day aright, and take care that all Perſons under your Roof do the ſame. You that are Maſters are wont to be careful that your Servants are employ'd on other Days in *your Service* and Buſineſs (and this indeed is what you ſhould require of them) but then forget not to call upon them to reſerve this Seaſon for the *Service of God*, yours and their great Maſter. Upon this Day, your Servants are diſengag'd from earthly and worldly Employments, and are perfectly at *leiſure* to be Religious: It is *your* fault therefore if they be not exercis'd in holy Duties, if they frequent not the ſacred Ordinances, if they ſpend not their Time both in publick and private Acts of Religion; if they ſerve not God in *his* Houſe, and in *yours* too, if they make not this Day a true and real *Sabbath*, a reſting and ceaſing from all Sin.

Under this Head (becauſe I will contract rather than multiply Particulars) I will adjoin this likewiſe, that you are not only obliged to take Care that your Families do conſtantly addict themſelves to Prayers, to reading and hearing God's Word, and the obſervance of the Lord's-day, but alſo that they remember to partake of the Lord's-Supper when they are fit for it, but not before. Take care that they bring thoſe Graces with them, which will make them worthy Receivers of Chriſt's Body and Blood; and having brought them, they will certainly increaſe them, and carry them back improv'd and cultivated; for this is the right Courſe to render them compleat and entire Chriſtians. See then that you bring them up to a reverent Eſteem of this Ordinance, and of thoſe other Sacred Inſtitutions of the Goſpel which I mention'd before. I will conclude theſe Particulars with thoſe choice, but plain Words of Mr. *Perkins*, who was once the Miniſter of this Pariſh and the Paſtor of this Church * "It is falſe "Faith, ſaith he, when Men conceive a ſtrong Perſwaſion that Chriſt is their "Saviour, and yet for all this contemn and deſpiſe the Miniſtry of the Word "and Sacraments: For true Faith is conceived, cheriſhed and confirmed by the "uſe of theſe; and we may there ſeek Chriſt where God will give him us. Now, "God

* The True Gain. p. 6.

" God gives Chriſt in the Word and Sacraments, and in them he doth as it were " open his Hand, and reach forth all the Bleſſings of Chriſt unto us." Thus he,

To perfect and ſum up all, the laſt Direction which I leave with Parents and Maſters is this; be ſure that you ſet your Children and Servants a *good Example.* If you be defective here, all that hath been ſaid is loſt, all the Advice that I have tender'd comes to nothing: You pull down that with one Hand which you build up with another; wherefore let me intreat you to compleat and finiſh all by the exemplarineſs of your own Practice and Behaviour.

AND thus I have briefly and plainly ſet before you your Duty as you are Houſholders and Governors of Families. You have it (you ſee) in a very narrow compaſs: I wiſh you may as eaſily reduce it to Practice, and then you will ſoon find the good and happy Effect of it; for if theſe plain and practical Rules be duly obſerv'd by you, your Families will be turn'd into Churches, your Houſes into Chriſtian Synagogues, and this Pariſh, yea, this Town will be a *Bethel,* or Houſe of God. Let it be your earneſt Prayer therefore, that God would vouchſafe to *ſeal* theſe *Inſtructions* on your ſouls, that the Impreſſion of them may be apparently ſeen in your Lives.

To this purpoſe I proceed, in the next place, to *apply* this ſo uſeful and important Doctrine. Firſt, it will afford Matter of *Reproof*; Secondly, of *Exhortation.* The Reproof turns it ſelf to two ſorts of Perſons, namely, the *Negligent* and the *Prophane* Heads of Families.

Firſt, THE *Negligent* and *Careleſs* Parents or Maſters of Families muſt receive a Check. How is it that you have no Senſe of this great and indiſpenſible Duty? How will you be able to anſwer it when you come to leave the World, and afterwards when you appear before the impartial Tribunal? Have you had Time for the Works of your Calling, and for Vanity and Sin; and could you find none at all for the great Buſineſs of your Souls? Have you had no Leiſure to inſtruct your Children and Servants in the Grounds of Religion, and the Fundamental Points of Chriſtianity? Why do you not inform your Charge concerning their particular and proper Duties towards your ſelves, on which the Welfare and Peace of every Family do ſo much depend? If you are not willing or able to inſtruct them at home, why do ſome of you neglect to bring them to the public Aſſemblies, where they might be reminded of their everlaſting Concern, and be ſtirr'd up to the practice of a holy Life? Why do you not pray in your Families, and beg the Aid and Help of God's Spirit to enable you to perform all your Duties? What Account can you give of your Miſcarriage as to the Lord's Day, which was ſet apart on purpoſe for the entire Service of God? Why ſit you idle on this Day, on which you ought to be more than ordinary intent upon the great Work of Religion? Is it not worth your while to think how you may be ſav'd, and how your poor Children's Souls may eſcape the Damnation of Hell? Muſt every trifle, every toy take you off from the purſuit of Heaven and endleſs Felicity? Will every ſlight Pretence and idle Excuſe be accepted at the laſt Day?

AGAIN, What can you pretend for your not reproving and correcting of Sin in your Families? Why do you not make uſe of your Authority, and with your Frowns and Threatnings, and (if occaſion be) with a ſeverer Method put a check to Vice? And laſtly, would not your good Example be unſpeakably ſerviceable to the great Purpoſes I have been mentioning? Would not this abundantly contribute to the eſtabliſhing of Piety and Holineſs in your Habitations? But how defective have you been as to this and all the other Particulars afore-nam'd? O that you would conſider and lay to heart this groſs Neglect of your indiſpenſible Duty; for which it is impoſſible for you to pretend any tolerable Excuſe. You can never plead any thing for the wilful Omiſſion of that on which your Happineſs both here and hereafter depends. And this is the *Reproof* which I intended for the *ſlothful* and *careleſs* Houſholder.

Secondly, THERE is a more ſevere one due to the *prophane* and *diſſolute* Maſters of Families. There are many who are ſo far from promoting the Service of God in their Houſes, that they ſet their Children, their Servants, and all that belong to them about *Satan*'s Work. They live and act as if there were no divine Being to take notice of what they do now, and as if there were no Rewards or Puniſhments hereafter. They are ſo far from making conſcience of reforming their Families, that their main Buſineſs is to corrupt and debauch them. They deſpiſe Religion as a low and mean thing; they laugh at the Profeſſors of it; they do the worſt Actions, and then defend them, they attempt the moſt horrid Enterprizes, and then glory in them. I have not time now to rifle all the particular Sins and Enormities with which too many Families abound at this Day. At your firſt Entrance into ſome Houſes, Rudeneſs and Immodeſty firſt of all preſent themſelves to your view. You may eſpy, if you go further, a diſreſpecting and diſhonouring of Parents, a Diſſention among Brethren, brawling and quarrelling and unchriſtian Animoſities. If you proceed further, you'll find that Intemperance and Luxury, Pride and Wantonneſs inhabit there. They never remember, or ſo much as mention their Creator, or take his Name into their Mouths, unleſs it be in Oaths and Curſes. Exceſs of Wine and ſtrong Drink are the only Tokens of Kindneſs and Friendſhip they can afford; as if that Saying of the *Jewiſh* Doctors were written on the Walls of their Rooms, “Thoſe Houſes are not bleſſed where there is not in every “place a laviſh number of Drink-Offerings for their thirſty Gueſts.

Go into other Families, and there you'll find Vices predominant of another but as bad a Nature. Lying and Falſhood, Hypocriſy and Diſſimulation, and a greedy Deſire of worldly Gain are chiefly promoted. And in brief, Parents are ſo far from inſtructing their Children in the Ways of Godlineſs, that they make it their great Work to inſtil vitious Principles into them, and to indulge them in all manner of Wickedneſs: And when they offend moſt groſly, they ſuffer them to go unpuniſh'd, and by their lewd Examples harden them in the Commiſſion of Vice. What *Socrates* was accus'd for of old, namely, for perverting and corruping of Youth, is now the juſt imputation that may be laid upon many Parents. You would think they made it their Buſineſs to deprave and corrupt their Children, and to render them much worſe than they are by their own Inclinations. Wherefore there is juſt occaſion to apply that of the Wiſe Man, *Their Houſes incline unto Death, and their Paths unto the Dead.* Or, as he ſpeaks in another place, *Their Houſes are the way to Hell, they go down to the Chambers of Death.* This is the *Reproof* and *Warning* which I thought my ſelf oblig'd to leave with ungodly and diſſolute Parents and Governors of Families, (if I may call them *Governors* who ſo ill deſerve it.)

AFTER Reproof ſuffer a Word of *Exhortation.* Firſt, reflect on your ſelves and your Practice, and if you find that you have neglected that great Duty I have been treating of, and much more if it appear that you have encourag'd your Children or Servants in Vice and Prophaneneſs, let me requeſt you in the firſt place to lament and bemoan your paſt Behaviour, and with hearty Remorſe and Repentance to beg pardon for it. Say thus with yourſelves, How unworthily and baſely have we acted? How little have we taken notice of that Relation which God's Providence hath placed us in? We have had a Family, but no Religion in it: We have had Servants, but we took no care to inſtruct them in the things of God: We expected and demanded Service from them, but we never put them in mind of their great Maſter. We have had Children, but never reminded them of their Father which is in Heaven. We have pretended to bear *a Love* to our Off-ſpring, and yet we have not ſhew'd a true Affection to them, for that would diſcover itſelf in conſulting the Good and Welfare of their Souls. God hath committed a Charge to us, but we have been forgetful of that Duty which was requir'd of us in that Condition and Station, and therefore moſt juſtly have we deſerv'd the divine Diſpleaſure and Indignation. Let ſuch bitter Reflections as theſe excite an unfeign'd Sorrow and Regret in your Minds for your former miſ-doings. And I hope my plain and downright Dealing with you hath, by the divine Grace, diſpos'd and fitted you for this penitential Temper. You ſee your Errors and Failures, therefore forthwith forſake them, and turn into the right Way, and amend your Lives.

Which is the next thing I exhort you to, namely, that you betake yourſelves for the future to a careful Diſcharge of your Duty towards your Families. Let Religion and the ſerious Practice of it flouriſh in your Habitations. This more eſpecially concerns *Magiſtrates* and *Miniſters*: Firſt, I ſay, Magiſtrates, and thoſe in Place and Authority, as we ſee here in the Example in the Text. For theſe Words, *I and my Houſe will ſerve the Lord*, were ſpoken by one who was a public

Perſon, one that was the ſupreme Governor and Commander in chief of all *Iſrael.* As for my part, ſaith he, I am reſolv'd to cleave with full purpoſe of heart unto the Lord, and to regulate my Life and Actions: And the next thing that I will take care of, is the well-ordering of my Family, my Children and Servants, and thoſe who are my peculiar Truſt at home. And it is worth your obſerving what Influence this Reſolution had on the People of *Iſrael.* No ſooner had this Governor profeſs'd his firm Reſolves of ſerving God, but you find preſently that he is follow'd by the whole Body of the People. Verſ. 16. *The People anſwer'd and ſaid, God forbid that we ſhould forſake the Lord, to ſerve other gods: for the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up and our Fathers out of the Land of Egypt, from the Houſe of Bondage.——Therefore will we ſerve the Lord, for he is our God.* And again, ver. 21. *The People ſaid unto Joſhua, nay, but we will ſerve the Lord.* You ſee what the ſingle Example of a great Man can do: You ſee what Power the Practice of a Ruler hath. Therefore if there *were* any of *that* Rank here, I would requeſt them to lead the way, and they need not fear but there will be many to follow them. Let *them* ſet a Pattern of Family-Religion, and there will be ſeveral that will be ambitious to imitate them. Let *them* ſay with *Joſhua, I and my Houſe will ſerve the Lord*; and not only ſay ſo, but practiſe it: And then they may aſſure themſelves that they ſhall have ſundry Perſons to imitate them, who will even reckon it an Honour to tread in their Steps.

Miniſters likewiſe are more particularly concern'd in this Matter (for you muſt give us leave to preach to our ſelves, as well as to you): Miniſters, I ſay, of all Men, if they have Families, ſhould be very ſollicitous to keep up a religious Government among them; and if they have Children and Servants, they ſhould be more than ordinarily careful to breed them up in the Fear of the moſt High, to ſeaſon them with virtuous Principles, and to inſtil a Senſe of Godlineſs into them. It is part of the Character of an evangelical * Biſhop, that *he rule well his own Houſe*; and particularly it is added, that *he ought to have his Children in Subjection with all Gravity*, or Modeſty. Thoſe that are the publick Inſtructors and Guides of Souls, ſhould more ſignally look to this; they muſt religiouſly educate their Family. And the reaſon of this is adjoyn'd in the next verſe, *For if a Man know not how to rule his own Houſe, how ſhall he take care of the Church of God?* Not but that a Perſon may be very fit to teach and rule in the Church, and may actually teach and rule his Flock in a right manner, tho' he cannot have his Children or Servants in Subjection, tho' he can't prevail with them to be good and holy; for it is God alone that can effectually work this in them. But the meaning of the Apoſtle is, if one that is dignified with the high Calling of a Miniſter or Paſtor in the Church, be *wilfully* ignorant of the way of ordering his Family, if he be *careleſs* of this Concern, he is not worthy of that Office which he is intruſted with, and it is not probable that he will execute it aright. If he neglects the Ruling and wiſe Ordering of his Children, it can't be expected that he will govern his Flock as he ought to do. If he doth not advance Piety at home, it is not likely he will do it in the Church.

WHEREFORE if any of my Brethren be here preſent, I know they will (without being reminded of it by me) be ſenſible that thoſe who ſerve at the Altar, thoſe that adminiſter in ſacred Things, are more concern'd in this Affair than other Men, becauſe they are not only oblig'd, as all *other* Parents and Governors of Families, to propagate Religion in their Houſes, and among their private Charge; but becauſe hereby they give a good Teſtimony and Proof of their Fitneſs and Ability to preſide over the Congregation, and to rule the Church of Chriſt. For this reaſon a Clergyman ſhould principally obſerve the Apoſtle's Advice, * *τὸν ἴδιον οἶκον εὐσεβεῖν, to ſhew piety at home*; but rather thus (if we will tranſlate it exactly) *to ſhew piety to his own Houſe* or *Family*, to be godly and religious within his own Walls, and to make his Family ſuch, as far as it lies in his Power.

BUT I muſt enlarge the Horizon, and extend my *Exhortation* to you *all*, all of you to whom the Care of Families is committed. It ought to be your ſincere Reſolution and conſtant Practice to take care that the Service of God be promoted among you. Let every Maſter of a Family ſay with *Joſhua*, *As for me and*

* 1 Tim. iii. 4.

* 1 Tim. v. 4.

my Houſe, we will ſerve the Lord. Let every Miſtreſs of a Family ſay as *Eſther*, *I and my Maids will do likewiſe*, Eſth. iv. 16. You, whom God hath intruſted with Children, ought to improve all Opportunities to inſtruct them in the way of Holineſs, and to reform their Lives and Converſations. Be reſolv'd that nothing ſhall be able to divert you from your Duty. And aſſure yourſelves that if you be reſolv'd, if you be ſerious, and in good earneſt, the Task is half done, and in a ſhort time you will, by the divine Grace aſſiſting you, compleat the Work.

And now, to further you in this neceſſary Work of inſtructing and reforming your Families, and conſulting the ſpiritual Good of your Domeſtick Relations; I deſire you to ſet before them the *Examples* of thoſe holy Perſons who have been eminent in this Particular; not only this pious Governor in my Text, but others mention'd in the Sacred Writ. Remember how pleaſing it was to God, that *Abraham*, *Jacob*, *Job*, and other religious Parents, took care of their Families. The firſt of theſe is characteris'd by God himſelf, as one that would *command his Children and his Houſhold to keep the way of the Lord*, Gen. xviii. 19. The ſecond enjoin'd his *Houſhold and all that were with him, to put away the ſtrange Gods from among them*, Gen. xxxv. 2. The third, when his Family had done any Thing amiſs, offer'd Sacrifice, and pray'd for them, *Job* i. 5. *David* was an excellent Inſtance of this, *Pſal.* ci. 2. *I will walk within my* House *with a perfect Heart* i. e. I will give a Pattern of Uprightneſs at Home. *Mine Eyes ſhall be upon the Faithful of the Land, that they may dwell with me. He that walketh in a perfect Way he ſhall ſerve me; he that worketh Deceit ſhall not dwell within my* House, v. 6, 7, 8. He would not entertain in his Family any Perſons that were diſſolute in any kind whatſoever. In the New Teſtament *Cornelius* is repreſented to be one that *feared God with all his Houſe*, Acts x. 2. We read that *Timothy* was inſtructed by his Grand-mother and Mother in the Law of God, and the Principles of Religion. And this was the Commendation of all the worthy Chriſtians of old. Go *you* and do likewiſe; let your Practice be ſuitable to the Example of theſe Holy Men; bring Godlineſs into Credit among thoſe who are committed to your Truſt; ſee that the great God be ſerv'd and honour'd under your Roof.

To enforce which Exhortation, I will requeſt you to let theſe following Conſiderations take place with you.

1. Consider the neceſſity of a pious Education, of a timely and early preparing young Perſons for the receiving of Religion. It might be remark'd here, that the moſt refined Wits among the *Gentile* Philoſophers have ſpoken excellent Things of the early Inſtruction of Youth; * *Right Education is the Head of all good Diſcipline*, ſaith *Plato* in his Book of Laws. And he there frequently inculcates this, that great care is to be taken of Children, that they be rightly inſtituted, becauſe as they are managed and order'd, ſo will the Commonwealth thrive and proſper. And accordingly, we read that that brave Man uſed to take Home with him the moſt ſprightly and ingenious Youths he could meet with, to promote and cultivate their forward Principles, and cheriſh the early Seeds of Virtue which he beheld in them. *Ariſtotle* in † two of his Books hath obſerv'd, that by the neglect of Education Man becomes the worſt of all Creatures. That excellent Moraliſt *Plutarch* hath an entire Treatiſe concerning the Inſtitution of Children, wherein there are ſeveral remarkable Paſſages not unworthy to be quoted in this Place, even in a Chriſtian Congregation. Theſe and other obſerving and ſagacious Authors agree in this, that Remiſneſs in bringing up of Youth, is the great cauſe of the Corruption of Manners in the World; and that the early inſtilling of Principles by good Education, is the beſt and only Remedy againſt that Corruption, and is abſolutely requiſite for the rectifying of Mankind. We ſee that Nature is not more careful and delicate about any Thing than the Formation of the *Fœtus*. So Morality is in nothing more exquiſite than in giving Rules for the forming and diſciplining of Youth, which is a kind of Embrio in reſpect of riper Age. Nor can *Chriſtianity* be converſant about any Thing with greater Curioſity and Care, than the framing the Minds of the young Retainers to Chriſtianity, and the directing them into the right.

† *Polit. l.* 1. *c.* 2. *Nicomach. l.* 2. *c.* 1.

2. Consider this, that all your Care, and Proviſion for the temporal Concerns of your Families will avail nothing without this. *Achitophel* was careful *to ſet his Houſe in order*, i. e. to diſpoſe of Things in the beſt way for the world-

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* Κεφάλαιον παιδείας λέγομεν τὴν ὀρθὴν τροφήν. *De Leg. l.* 1.

ly Advantage of his Family, but you know how he neglected his greateſt Concern. Such is the *prepoſterous Wiſdom* of wicked and worldly Men; but it is indeed the greateſt *Folly* imaginable; *For what is a Man profited if he ſhall gain the whole World and loſe his own Soul?* if he ſhall look after and procure the temporal Welfare of himſelf and his Family, and yet diſregard his own and their everlaſting Happineſs? To which purpoſe is that admirable Paſſage in *Xenophon*; * *He that makes his Child a Perſon of Worth*, (namely, by his true Principles and Behaviour) *gives him much, and makes him a very wealthy Man, tho' he leaves him but little.* May not much more be ſaid of a Child religiouſly, piouſly, and chriſtianly educated? Such a one is a Perſon of *Worth* indeed, and is Maſter of the greateſt and moſt valuable *Riches*, tho his Parents beſtow but little upon him. Here then is *your* great Concern who are entruſted with Young ones; you muſt endeavour to ſeaſon them whilſt they are *ſuch*, with religious Principles, and to lay their Foundation right.

3. Consider this, that your promoting of Religion in your Families, will conciliate you a reverence and awe in the Hearts of thoſe who are under your Government, and conſequently they will prove Faithful and Obedient to you: As you are Parents and Maſters, you look for Reſpect and Obedience from your Children and Servants; but if you be inſtrumental to make them religious and good, you will thereby much more aſſure your ſelves of their Reſpect and Duty to you. Then you will be *Maſters* indeed, your *Authority* will be confirm'd, and all your Commands will be readily obey'd; for a true Senſe of Religion on Mens Minds, is the moſt powerful Spring of Obedience.

4. Consider that this will draw down a Bleſſing upon your Families. *Obed Edom*'s Houſhold fared the better for the *Ark* being under his Roof. You may expect that all the Concerns of your Family will proſper, if you ſincerely advance in it the Intereſt of *Religion*. If your Houſes be the Habitations of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs; if Piety takes up its Reſidence there, you are in the right way of ſucceeding well in whatever you undertake. I beſeech you therefore ask your ſelves whether *Religion* finds Reception within your Walls, whether the Members of your Family be inſtructed aright in their Duty, whether you take care to infuſe the Principles of Grace into the Minds of your Children and Servants betimes: If you do this you may ſay as *Heraclitus* upon Occaſion once ſaid to his Friends that came to ſee him, Come in, I pray, εἶσι γὰρ καὶ ἐνταῦθα θεοί, *here the Gods are preſent.* In a more ſanctified Stile you may aſſure them, that God and his Bleſſing doth dwell here.

5thly and Laſtly, Consider this, that the advancing of Religion in your Families is the beſt way to amend and reform the whole Nation. This being ſo weighty and important a Conſideration, I will enlarge a little upon it; and I pray let me not fail of your *Attention* now in the *Cloſe* of all. It cannot be deny'd that all Fleſh hath corrupted its Ways, and that a general Depravation of Manners hath overſpread this Land; on which account we may juſtly expect an univerſal Deſtruction. What courſe is there then to be taken? How ſhall we prevent or divert God's Judgments? You that hear me this Day are but an inconſiderable handful in reſpect of the whole Nation, nay, in compariſon of the Town and Place you live in. If you and your Families ſhould reform your Lives, How will the whole Kingdom, you may ſay, receive Benefit by it? Will the Community fare the better for *your* particular turning from your Sins?

To which I anſwer briefly; Firſt, A general Amendment in a Nation muſt take its riſe from particular Families, becauſe a Nation is made up of particular Perſons and Families; wherefore, the moſt proper and compendious way to work an entire Reformation in the Publick, is for every individual Perſon in a Family to begin with himſelf; thus the good Work would advance apace, and ſpeedily come to Perfection. The grand Reaſon why Vice is ſo predominant every where, is no other than this, becauſe Religion and Goodneſs are not begun and ſet forward at Home. An Amendment in private Dwellings would eaſily make way for an univerſal Redreſs Abroad. If Governors of Families, and thoſe who have the Education of Children, would promote the Service of

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* Ὁ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ παιδὰ πολλοῦ ἄξιον ἀποδείξας, κἂν ὀλίγα καταλιπῃ, πολλὰ ἔδωκε. Epiſt. ad Criton.

God in their *Houſes*, we ſhould ſee a ſtrange, but happy Alteration in the Publick; Religion would grow in Faſhion, an upright and godly Life would be every where eſteem'd, and looſe and licentious Practices would be generally diſcountenanc'd and puniſh'd.

BUT on the contrary, it is no wonder that Religion is ſo much out of Date, and that the Nation is over-run with Lewdneſs and Prophaneneſs, ſeeing the ſource and original of this general Depravation is not taken notice of and prevented. When *Families* are corrupted, *Kingdoms* cannot but be ſo too. Godlineſs muſt firſt be advanced in the leſſer circuit and compaſs of a Houſhold, before it be erected in the larger and wider Territories of a Realm. It was not without reaſon that ſome of the Ancients maintain'd that *Oeconomics* are the chiefeſt part of *Philoſophy*; the Art of ruling a Houſe and Family well, is the chiefeſt task of Morality. And it is ſo of *Chriſtianity*; for where private Families do effectually receive the Doctrines of Jeſus, and regulate their Lives by it, there the Community is apparently better by it; as we ſee the whole Body thrives and is in good Health when every ſeveral Member doth its proper Duty. Families are the Original of Towns, and Cities and Kingdoms; *theſe* are made up of *them* as of their Principles and Elements; the moſt expeditious way then to reform the one is to begin with the other. The Repentance of *Jeruſalem* is very remarkably ſet forth after this manner, in *Zech.* xii. *In that Day ſhall there be a great mourning, the Land ſhall mourn every Family apart, the Family of the Houſe of David apart, and their Wives apart,* &c. *All the Families that remain, every Family apart.* Godly Sorrow and Reformation muſt commence in particular Houſes and Families, and that is the certain forerunner of a general Reformation.

But, SECONDLY, Let me ſuggeſt this to you for your Comfort and Encouragement, that if you and your Families turn unto God, and amend your Ways, there is ſome Hope, that tho' the whole Nation doth not follow your Example, yet it may fare the better for *you*. One *Achan* you know, brought a Curſe upon all *Iſrael*; one Sinner may derive Judgments on the whole Community. So on the other Hand, God may be merciful to a City or Nation, for the ſake of a few holy and righteous Perſons. He would have ſpar'd *Sodom* if ten righteous Souls, yea, a leſſer Number could have been found in it. Be not diſcouraged then, a Family of ſuch as are ſincere Servants of God may reſcue a whole City, Town or Kingdom.

HOWEVER, thirdly, (and ſo I will ſhut up all) if you and your Families ſhall not be able, through your hearty Repentance and Reformation to hinder Judgments from coming down upon the Publick; yet know this, that you have well and wiſely provided for *your ſelves*; for you ſhall either be hid and preſerv'd in the Time of common Calamity, or you ſhall in a ſpecial and extraordinary manner be aſſiſted and ſuccour'd. In a word, if you faithfully diſcharge your Duty, and take care that your Children, and Servants, and whole Family do the ſame, nothing ſhall befal you that ſhall be to the real hurt and damage either of your Souls or Bodies. Wherefore comfort one another with theſe Words.

* * *

Be Religious betimes.

A
DISCOURSE
ON
[*Remember now thy Creator*, &c.]

ECCLES. xii. 1.

Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth, while the evil Days come not, nor the Years draw nigh, when thou ſhalt ſay, I have no Pleaſure in them.

IN the ninth *Verſe* of the foregoing *Chapter*, you hear the Royal Preacher, the Penman of my Text, ſpeak in this Ironical Manner; *Rejoyce O young Man in thy Youth, and let thy Heart chear thee in the Days of thy Youth, and walk in the ways of thy Heart, and in the ſight of thine Eyes.* For young Men (as one hath long ſince given the Character of them) are * merrily diſpoſed, given to laughter and drolling; and accordingly *Solomon* doth in ſome manner comply with them, and thinks fit to imitate here their light and jeſting Humour; but he doth it that he may bring them to a ſerious Contemplation, firſt of their Folly, and then of their Duty. He bids the young Man be merry and jocund, and indulge himſelf in all worldly Delights, but (that he may not be miſunderſtood when he frames his Diſcouſe in this manner of Stile) he cloſes his Sarcaſm with thoſe ſevere Words, *Know thou that for all theſe Things God will bring thee to Judgment.* And that his former Ironical way of ſpeaking may not be miſinterpreted, he further adjoins this ſober Advice in my Text, *Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth.* The Sum of which Words is this, that God is to be *remember'd*; he is to be remember'd as a *Creator*; he is to be remember'd as *thy* Creator; and not that neither when thou thinkeſt fit, but even *now*, in this preſent Seaſon; and if thou beeſt in thy *Youth*, there is no fitter Time than that to ſerve thy God in.

OF all theſe in their Order: And the firſt and moſt obvious Thing, and that which ſtands in the front of the Text, is that noble Act of the Soul, which hath reference here unto God, *Remember*. And ſo the firſt Thing which preſents itſelf as a Duty worthy of your Performance, is the due *Remembrance of God*. Indeed our Duty towards God is variouſly expreſs'd in holy Writ. The holy Spirit is pleaſed to convey the Notion of it to our Minds by diverſe Words; as namely, by fearing him, by believing and truſting in him, by ſeeking him, by knowing him, by loving him, by hoping in him, and here by remembring him. By which Expreſſions are ſometimes meant thoſe particular and diſtinct Acts of Religion, as *fearing God* in the proper and peculiar meaning of the Words, and ſo of the reſt; but at other Times theſe Terms are taken more largely, and comprehend our whole Duty towards God; for this is no unprofitable Obſervation, that in the Stile of ſacred Scripture, all Religion is often times expreſs'd by one eminent part of it. Our whole Duty is denoted by Knowledge, or Faith, or Love, or Fear, or the like. The reaſon I conceive is this, becauſe where any of theſe are truly and really, all the reſt are there likewiſe. There is a Connexion between theſe Graces, and they are never ſeparated from one another. He that *remembers God* aright, fears him, believes him, loves him, and diſcharges all the other Duties before mention'd.

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* Φιλογέλωτες, εὐτράπελοι.

Of this *Remembring of God* I am now to ſpeak; which I will conſider firſt, more preciſely and diſtinctly; ſecondly, more largely and generally. *To remember God* is to reflect on thoſe Notices which we have of him in our Minds, to rifle our Conſciences, to retrieve thoſe Sentiments which are lodged in our Souls of a God, to call to mind the ſupreme Being that made us; this is the firſt ſtroke, the firſt Line we muſt draw in our pourtraying this Duty. And indeed every Man may, if he will, look into his own Soul, and there eſpy a Deity. The Soul being fram'd after the Image of God, in this Mirror we beſt contemplate him; there being in all the ſublime Operations and Functions of our Minds certain Footſteps of Divinity, apparent Characters and Impreſſions of the chiefeſt and firſt Being. The Doctrine of *Connate Idea's* is no new Philoſophy, at leaſt it is no Novel Diſcovery to thoſe that have free Commerce with themſelves, and are not ſtrangers to their own Minds. It may be rightly and innocently ſaid (tho' not according to the Fiction of the Platoniſts) that Knowledge is but *Remembrance*: We may eaſily rouze our dormant Principles, and from that native Stock of Notions, which was our very Birth-right, we may enrich our ſelves with the Knowledge of the true God, and of his divine Attributes, which are natural and eſſential to him. This is the loweſt ſtep of our Duty, and it were well if Men would come up ſo far; if they would ſeriouſly call to Mind the infinite Author of their Being; if they would remember that there is a God, an omnipotent and omniſcient Eſſence that ſways the World, and diſpoſes of all Affairs. It were well if they would diſcover ſo much of the rational Nature in them as to reflect on their Minds, and to find him there who beſtowed upon them thinking and reaſonable Souls. Hence would reſult an open Acknowledgment and a free Profeſſion of the Belief of this excellent and tranſcendent Being; and all Atheiſm and Irreligion would loſe ground in the World: Hence would ariſe a holy fear and dread of God's Name, and (which is a more deſirable Effect) a Love and Delight in him, and a generous complying with his Will and Pleaſure.

To proceed therefore to the larger Acceptation of this Word; in the ſacred Stile of Scripture, to *remember God* is not only to *call him to mind*, but to be rightly affected towards him in our Hearts, to be thankful to him for all the marks of his Favour and Goodneſs; to recount the ſeveral Mercies which he hath conferred upon us; to take a particular Survey of his Kindneſſes, and to ſhew our Gratitude for them, that is, to manifeſt it by a holy and pious ordering of our Ways and Actions. * *To remember* and *turn unto the Lord*, are join'd together, and are expreſſive one of another. And on the contrary, *to forget God* is (according to the ſame holy Stile) to deſpiſe and neglect him, to diſeſteem and undervalue him, to act in oppoſition to his Will and Laws, and to follow the dictates of the evil Spirit, the God of this World; this is clear from Judg. iii. 7. *The Children of Iſrael did evil in the ſight of the Lord, and forgot the Lord their God*: And from Deut. viii. 11. *Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God in not keeping his Commandments*; and in this Senſe the Wicked are ſaid to forget God, *Pſal.* xix. 18. — cvi. 21. This then is our grand Duty and Concern, we are oblig'd to *remember God* ſo as to obey him, and to obſerve all his Laws which he hath preſcribed us. Thus I have briefly diſpatch'd the firſt Obſervable.

* Pſal. xxii. 27.

The ſecond is the Specification of the Act, and the Manner of its being terminated on its Object. Under various Notions and different Apprehenſions doth the great God convey himſelf to our Minds; but *Solomon* here pitches particularly upon this of his *Creation.* He bids us remember him, ſerve and obey him as our *Creator*, as the Author of all Things, and more eſpecially the Source and Fountain of our particular Being. *Remember thy Creator*; for nothing is ſo unnatural as to forget him. As in our *Creed*, all the Chriſtian Faith is ſteer'd and conducted by our Belief of the *Almighty God, who is the Maker of Heaven and Earth*; ſo in our Practice, our whole Duty is influenced and directed by our *remembring God as our Creator.* That *Memento* which is prefix'd to the Fourth Commandment is of the like Nature with this, *Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath Day*; for in the foregoing ſix Days, *the Lord made Heaven and Earth, the Sea and all that in them is.* Call to mind the wonderful Works of the Creation, think of God's erecting this great Fabrick of the World. This is the firſt thing which the holy Book of God preſents us with, *the creating of the Heaven and the Earth.* Look up therefore to thoſe great and ſtately Chambers of Light above, *the Heavens which declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament which ſheweth his handy-work*; and do thou praiſe the wiſe, the bleſſed, the glorious Architect of them. After thou haſt view'd thoſe higheſt Stories of this vaſt Structure of the World, come down and entertain thyſelf with what this Earth affords thee. Here is Matter for thy endleſs Contemplation and Wonder. Wherever thou directeſt thy Eye, thou mayeſt clearly diſcern the Footſteps of divine Power and Wiſdom. Even in the loweſt Shrub, in the vileſt and moſt contemptible Inſect, thou mayeſt ſee the God of Glory and infinite Perfection. Complain not of the Loſs of *Solomon*'s *Natural Hiſtory*, ſo long as thou canſt look abroad, and read the *Book of Nature*, which lies open every hour before thee, where even he that runs may read the Characters of a Deity. Or if thou art curious, and wouldſt read the ſmaller Print of Nature, Art will furniſh thee with Spectacles, Glaſſes made on purpoſe to diſcover to thy View the fineſt and ſubtileſt Bodies, and their minuteſt Particles and Motion. Having look'd about thee, at laſt pry into thyſelf, examine God's Workmanſhip in the Frame of thy Body, which is the Epitome of the upper and lower World. Scan this excellent Structure, take notice of its ſeveral Apartments, Conveniencies and Contrivances; ſtudy the exactneſs and accuracy of all its Parts and Organs. There is not one Veſſel belonging to it, but is fitted and framed for its proper Work: There is not the leaſt Coat or Fibre but hath its peculiar Office and Service. Here you that are ſtudious and contemplative have a Task worthy of your choiceſt Faculties: Here is a noble Work to employ yourſelves about: Here is a brave and becoming Exerciſe to entertain your ſelves with. And your Souls themſelves (by which you are able to be thus employ'd) is yet a nobler and more worthy Entertainment.

Thus you may ſee God in all the *Works of Nature*, you may read the *Creator* in every Leaf, in every Line of this great Volume. Which way ſoever you look, whether you caſt your Eyes upward, or direct them downward, or take a Proſpect of your ſelves; you are furniſh'd with Arguments of God's wonderful Power, Goodneſs and Wiſdom. Forget not then the Operation of his Hands: ſtudy God the *Creator.*

But more eſpecially take notice of him as thou findeſt *thyſelf* in a peculiar manner related to him. Which brings me to the third Obſervable in the Words, *viz.* (the more near and cloſe Application of what hath been ſaid) Thou art to *remember* God, not only at large as a *Creator*, but as *Thine.* The general Belief of that great and important Truth before-mention'd and explain'd, is not ſufficient: We are concern'd to know and feel the Vertue of it in theſe particular Inſtances. Firſt, Thy *Creator* is thy *Preſerver.* He that made the World upholds it: He that gave thee a Body and Soul, continually ſuſtains them, and keeps them from relapſing into a Non-exiſtence. *In him we live and move*, as well as *have our Being.* All we have, and all that we can do is from this bleſſed Founder and Benefactor. We are every moment receiving from him, and partaking of his Bounty. Thus we muſt acknowledge God to be our *continual Creator*, i. e. the gracious Author of our Converſation, and of the innumerable Bleſſings which perpetually attend it. If this be cloſely urg'd upon our Souls, it will make us live as dependent Beings, as mere precarious Creatures, as thoſe that wholly owe their Exiſtence and Well-being to another. Secondly then, remember that this God made and created thee for himſelf. We are not to imagine

gine that the All-wiſe God ſent us into the World upon an idle Errand: We were not made to fall in Love with Earth, and to employ our Faculties about mean and trifling Things. The true Senſe of this will make us deſpiſe the World, and breathe after Heaven, and paſſionately long for the Fruition of God. Thirdly, Bear this upon thy Mind, that thy God, who *created* thee, knows all thy Ways and Actions, and * *conſiders all thy Works*: Yea, thy *Creator* is intimately acquainted with thy very Heart, and ſpies thy ſecret Thoughts, and underſtands the moſt remote Workings of thy Soul. The Artiſt who contrives the whole Scheme and Platform of a Building, knows undoubtedly all the Rooms and Parts of it. God hath made us, and therefore he is no ſtranger to the inward Receſſes and Cloſets of our Souls. This great Truth being rooted in our Minds, will cauſe us to be ſincere and upright, to act always as in God's Sight, and not fondly to imagine that any of our Thoughts or Ways can be hid from him.

* Pſal. xxxii. 15.

AGAIN, urge this upon thy Mind, That thou art wholly at the Diſpoſal of thy *Creator*. *He hath made us, and not we our ſelves*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt; and thence concludes, that *we are his People, and the Sheep of his Paſture*, i. e. we are at his beck and command, we muſt follow his Guidance and Direction. He may do with us as he pleaſeth, and it is certain he will do us no wrong. If we live in the Senſe of this, we ſhall baniſh all Murmuring and Repining, and with all Calmneſs and Meekneſs ſubmit to every Diſpenſation of the divine Providence in the World.

MOREOVER, be aſſur'd, that this God who *created* thee, will provide for thee. It was his good Pleaſure to bring thee into the World, and he will certainly take care of thee all the time thou art here. But I have mention'd this in part already, and therefore I am to add ſome greater thing here, which I will repreſent to you in the Words of the Prophet || *Iſaiah, Thus ſaith the Lord, that created thee, O Jacob, and he that form'd thee, O Iſrael, fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy Name; thou art mine. When thou paſſeſt thro' the Waters I will be with thee, and thro' the Rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: When thou walkeſt thro' the Fire thou ſhalt not be burnt, neither ſhall the Flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the holy one of Iſrael, thy Saviour*: With many other indearing Expreſſions in the following Verſes. Whence it is eaſy to infer, that the Titles of *Creator* and *Former* ſpeak God's Care and Tuition, his great Tenderneſs and Love, even in redeeming and ſaving of his People. In the full extent of theſe Words of the evangelical Prophet, the *new Creation* by Jeſus Chriſt, the bleſſed Meſſias, the *Redemption* of the World by his beloved is to be underſtood. For in Chriſt, God the Father is again a *Creator*, making us *new Creatures*. Wherefore we may make this a general Ground of our relying and truſting in him for Life and Happineſs.

|| Chap. xliii. 1, &c.

Laſtly, REMEMBER that the ſame Omnipotent Being that *created* thee can deſtroy thee. This is that which *Job* was ſenſible of: * *Thine Hands*, ſaith he, *have made me and faſhioned me, yet thou doſt deſtroy me. Fear* then and tremble at him, *who is able to deſtroy both Soul and Body in hell: I ſay unto you, fear him.* Dare not to lift up your Hands againſt Heaven, and to rebel againſt him that made you. Forget not your Relation and Dependance, as you are *Creatures.* Know that Creation and Deſtruction come from the ſame Hand. Remember that *he that made you will ſhew you no Mercy*, unleſs you abandon your evil Ways, and unfeignedly turn unto God, and that ſpeedily. For God will not be mock'd, he will not ſuffer you to dally with him, and from Time to Time to adjourn your Repentance: No, your Duty is incumbent on you *now*.

* Job x. 8.

Which is the next Obſervable, *viz.* that the preſent Inſtant is allotted you to *remember* God in. Remember *now* thy Creator. For tho' this Word is not in the *Hebrew*, yet our Engliſh Tranſlators have inſerted it, to direct us to the Senſe and Mind of the Wiſe Man, who is urging us to the *preſent* and *ſpeedy* Performance of the forementionꞌd Duty. Delays in other Matters, *i. e.* in Things of an inferior Nature and meaner Moment may be tolerable, but here they are unſpeakably dangerous: For Eternity lies at Stake, and on this flitting Moment depends your everlaſting Woe or Bliſs. It is Folly as well as Sin to defer your Repentance: It is a want of Underſtanding as well as Vice. For you muſt know that your continuing in the Commiſſion of Sin will certainly harden your Hearts, and ſo make it a very difficult thing to repent at laſt. As you are every Day adding to the number of your Sins, ſo proportionably they will be more hardly parted with. For evil Habits will be contracted by the repetition of ſinful Acts: And then you'll find it no eaſy Task to eradicate thoſe grown Habits and a ſettled Cuſtom of Vice. Your Underſtandings will be more and more darkned; your Wills will grow more perverſe and ſtubborn; your Affections towards all Goodneſs will flag and decay, and when they are converſant with unlawful Objects, they will prove impetuous and rampant. Sin unrepented of and daily perſiſted in, will maintain in your Souls a greedy Deſire and Love of Vice, and bring you under the Dominion and Captivity of it. Continuing in your evil Courſes, without Remorſe and Contrition, will ſtrengthen and fortify all the Guards of Sin, and render all its Strong-holds impregnable. In a word, by cuſtomary ſinning and delaying your Repentance, all the Faculties of your Souls will be more and more corrupted and debauch'd, your Hearts obdurated, your Conſciences ſeared, your Sins multiplied, your Guilt aggravated, and God's Wrath increaſed. I appeal then to you whether it be not reaſonable, highly reaſonable to *break off your Sins by Repentance, to make haſte and delay not to keep the* divine *Commandments*, and in the Language of the Text, *to remember now your Creator?* The preſent Time is yours, and you may make it really advantageous to you. *Now* therefore mind the great and weighty Concern of your Souls; *now* work out your Salvation, and give all Diligence to make your Calling and Election ſure. The Tide now ſerves thee, the Winds blow favourably for thee; all Things make for thy Voyage: Oh do not lie idle, and ſleep on the Hatches, but hoiſt your Sails, and make after your Port with all ſpeed.

BUT I muſt paſs to the particular Circumſtance of Time, the ſpecifical Seaſon mention'd in the Text, *the Days of Youth*. In theſe blooming and healthful Years, *Remember your Creator*, addict your ſelves to the Service of your Maker. And it will appear to be very *reaſonable* to do this, if you conſider,

1. THAT this is the Seaſon which God chiefly accepts, and (as I may ſay) prefers before others. * *I remember thee, the Kindneſs of thy Youth*, ſaith God to his own People. * Jer. ii. 2. The *firſt Fruits*, and the *firſt-born* were God's, by a peculiar Dedication under the Law of *Moſes*, and indeed before it. There is as great reaſon, that now under the Goſpel your Youth and Strength and early Endeavours ſhould be devoted to the Service of your Maker and Redeemer. Not only Circumciſion under the Old Teſtament, but Baptiſm under the New, acquaints us, that we ought to be conſecrated to God, and ſet apart for Religion in our very Infancy. We read, that *Samuel*, when he was a Child, was given to the Lord. *Joſiah* when young ſought after God: At eight Years of Age he attended to good Counſel, and ſought God's Face, and at twelve he actually purg'd and reform'd the Kingdom of *Judah*. *John Baptiſt* was ſanctified in the Womb. *Timothy* was acquainted with the Scriptures from a Child. The *Children* of the Elect Lady were found walking in the Truth. Theſe are the young Saints which the Book of God hath regiſtred. Chriſt would have the *Children* brought to him, and blamed them that would have kept them from him. In regard then of divine Acceptation, this is the fitteſt Seaſon.

2. REMEMBER God *in your Youth*, for this is the Seaſon wherein you are moſt apt to be inveigled and drawn away from him. *Cereus in vitium flecti*, was a handſome Expreſſion of the Young Man's Temper and Complexion: He is as ſoft and pliable as Wax, and therefore too capable of the Impreſſes of Vice and Vanity. † *Eaſily deceived* is one of the Epithets which the Philoſopher faſtens on him; † Εὐεξαπάτητος. he tamely ſuffers himſelf to be cheated and impoſed upon. The Tinder is not more apt to catch Fire from every little ſpark, than he is ready and prone to be inflamed with Luſt, and to be ſet on fire of Hell. Young Men, as ſuch, are inclined ‖ to live according to their Luſts and Paſſions, and chiefly to purſue what is delightful, and what is preſent.

3. THIS is the Seaſon, as moſt prone to Vice in its own Nature, ſo, if it be cultivated and improved, moſt capable of Virtue and Goodneſs. The Young

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‡ Κατὰ πάθος ζῆν, ϗ μάλιστα διώκειν τὸ ἡδὺ αὐτοῖς, ϗ τὸ παρόν. Eth. lib. 8.

Man may be reckon'd as a pure *Raſa Tabula*, as fair Paper not yet blurr'd and blotted: He is as diſintereſs'd and clear as the Philoſopher's *firſt Matter*, free from all Form and Impreſſion. This Age therefore is moſt docible and tractable: All Arts and Sciences are moſt eaſily inſuſ'd into Young Heads. Why then ſhould not the Art of living well, and the Myſtery of Godlineſs be taught them in their Minority? Youth hath many Advantages for Religion; for tho' their Temper, as to many Things inclines them to Vice, yet it is as true that it makes them capable of as great Virtue. *Young Men* (ſaith *Ariſtotle*; and he hath given us an excellent Character of them) are [a] *earneſt in their Deſires and Wiſhes:* Wherefore let them learn to terminate theſe their impetuous Deſires and Longings on Things of the higheſt and moſt excellent Nature, and to breathe with great vehemency after the Enjoyment of undiſturbed Happineſs. They are *not* [b] *addicted to Covetouſneſs* and inordinate Love of Riches, which is a great Step to the heighth of Morality, and may be a huge Advancement of noble and heavenly Deſigns in them. They are [c] *ambitious and ſtudious of Honour*, but more of *Victory:* Which may be a ſharp Spur to all worthy Endeavours and Enterprizes, and may make them aſpire after that Honour which comes from above, and will lead them to eternal Glories. The ſame Author obſerves it, as part of their Character, that they are [d] *ſoon anger'd and incens'd:* How advantageouſly then may they turn the Force of this Paſſion againſt Sin, and ſhew their Wrath and Choler againſt what is diſpleaſing to God? Moreover, they are [e] *Lovers of Company and Society*: Which friendly and ſociable Diſpoſition may be improv'd by them to very excellent Purpoſe, both for their own and others Good: For the Benefit that is reap'd by Communion and Converſe is unſpeakable. Again, Young Men *are* [f] *apt to believe and hope well:* And how naturally then are they diſpos'd to the Chriſtian Faith, and to that Charity which thinketh no Evil? Laſtly, they are obſerv'd to be [g] *modeſt and ſhamefac'd*: This is their natural Complexion, and how is it to Virtue and Goodneſs? For unleſs Men had thrown off all Baſhfulneſs and Modeſty, it is impoſſible they could arrive to the Commiſſion of thoſe Sins which we ſee daily acted. Thus I have in ſome meaſure ſhew'd you how Youth in it ſelf (if it be not deprav'd and debauch'd) is capable of receiving Impreſſions of Religion and Goodneſs. Let me add, This is the Seaſon wherein you are able to do the moſt and the beſt Service for your Creator. Your Health and Strength, your Agility and Vigor, not only invite you, but fit you for this Work. The Spirits of Youth are hot and briſk, which makes them highly ſerviceable to Religion, and all virtuous Undertakings. Take Notice on what account St. *John* tells us he writ unto *yourg Men*, † *becauſe ye are ſtrorg*, ſaith he, *and the Word of God abideth in you* (your Memory and other Faculties being fit to retain it) *and ye have overcome the wicked one.* You look like Champions, you are made for Combats and Wars, for Conqueſt and Victory: There are many laborious Tasks and heavy Burdens which are fit only for your Shoulders.

4. THE right Improvement of this Seaſon hath abundant Influence on your whole ſucceeding Life. *If your firſt Fruits be holy, the Lump will be alſo holy: And if the Root be holy, ſo will the Branches be.* It is no wonder that *Tiberius* prov'd ſuch a Drinker, and therefore got the Nick-name of *Biberius*; if it be remember'd what the *Roman* Story tells us, that his Nurſe (who perhaps herſelf was a wet one in the worſt Senſe) uſed conſtantly to give him, when a Child, Sops ſoak'd in Wine. What his firſt Years were inur'd to, he retain'd ever after. It is the Hiſtorian's Remark on another of the *Roman* Emperors, that ‖ he was the only Man of them all that was chang'd for the better: Intimating this, that it is extremely difficult, when Perſons begin ill, to make a good Progreſs or Concluſion. That of an antient and learned Father is an undoubted Truth, and every Days Experience confirms it, * That Children brought up and accuſtom'd to ill Manners in their Youth, will not eaſily come up to virtuous Actions when they are Men. When their tender Years are tainted with Vice,

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[a] Ἐπιθυμητικοί. [b] οὐ φιλοχρήματοι. [c] Φιλότιμοι, μᾶλλον δὲ φιλόνικοι. [d] Ὀξύθυμοι. [e] Φιλέταιροι. [f] Εὔπιστοι, εὐέλπιδες. [g] Αἰσχυντηλοί. † 1 Ep. ch. ii. ver. 14.

‖ *Solus omnium ante ſe Principum in melius mutatus. Sueton. in Veſpaſiano.*

* Οἱ ἐν διεφθαρμένοις ἤθεσι τρεφόμενοι παῖδες οὐ ῥᾳδίως μετ' ἀρετῆς εἰς ἀνδρείαν ἐκβήσονται. Iſ. Peluſ. Ep. l. 5.

there is little Hope that their Manhood ſhould receive any Amendment. When the Diſciples could not caſt out the Devil mention'd in *Mark* ix. 20; and when Chriſt himſelf ſaw with what Difficulty and Violence he came forth, with wallowing and foaming and renting of the poſſeſſed, he demanded how long that had happen'd to him? anſwer was made, *from a Child.* If wicked and diabolical Principles be infuſed into Perſons when they are young and tender, it is uſually hard to eject them afterwards.

And it is not only thus in reference to a virtuous Life, and the Tenor of all our Actions for the future, but alſo in reſpect of that Comfort and chearfulneſs of Spirit which may be look'd for in the courſe of our Life. *Job* complain'd, * *Thou makeſt me to poſſeſs the Iniquities of my Youth*: And one of his Friends deſcribing the State of the Wicked, adds this as part of it, † *His Bones are full of the Sins of his Youth*: The Enormities of the former part of his Life are felt and puniſh'd in his riper Years. *David* himſelf praying for Remiſſion of his Sins, inſerts this Petition, * *Remember not the Sins of my Youth*; thoſe being Sins of a more than ordinary Emphaſis. For firſt, it is likely theſe were more in Number than his other Faults. Ripeneſs of Years and ſtrength of underſtanding reclaim'd him from many former Follies. Secondly, The Sins of his Youth were exceedingly heinous, becauſe they were committed with greedineſs, with eager and impetuous Inclinations, with vigorous and impatient propenſions to Vice. Thirdly, They were highly injurious to God, becauſe they robb'd him of the beſt and chiefeſt part of that Time, which ſhould have been conſecrated to him and his Service. Again, tho' he had obtain'd of God a Pardon of thoſe Sins which he had committed in his Youth; tho the Wound was healed, yet the Scar ſtill remain'd; and as often as he ſaw it and obſerv'd it, and was ſenſible that others took notice of it, he hung down his Head and bluſh'd, he was confounded with the Senſe of his groſs Micarriages. On ſuch Accounts as theſe, the Sins and Obliquities of his youthful Years muſt needs be grievous and heavy in his declining Age.

* Chap. xiii. v. 26.
† Chap. xx. v. 11.
* Pſal. xxv. 7.

It was the uſual Speech of a good Man, that if it were lawful to envy any, he would envy thoſe that turn to God in their Youth, whereby they eſcape not only much Sin but much Sorrow. The avoiding of Sin in that part of your Life, the ſerving of God with a conſtant tenour of Obedience, is that which will make the Reflection of our paſt Life eaſy and pleaſant; yea, and make the approach of Death it ſelf welcome to you. They that practiſe this Duty in the Text, find real Comfort in it; when they come to lie on their Beds of Sickneſs and Languiſhment, then they feel the joyful Effects of ſerving God in their Youth. They were the dying Words of good old *Hilarion*, O my Soul, make thy Exit out of this World; Why doſt thou pauſe and ſtop? Thou haſt ſerv'd God theſe Threeſcore and Ten Years, and art thou afraid to die? An old Diſciple of Chriſt will die chearfully. Let this then prevail with you to begin *betimes* to ſeek God, and to ſet your ſelves ſeriouſly to the minding of Religion. You ſee there is a real Profit will accrue to you by a timely Remembrance of your Creator. This will prevent innumerable Miſcarriages in your Lives, this will guard you from preſumptuous Sins which are wont to lay waſte your Conſcience; this will ſave you a great deal of Toil and Labour in the Work of your Repentance; this will make you capable of bringing much Glory to God, and of being extraordinary ſerviceable to him whilſt you are in the World, and it will adminiſter abundant Joy to you when you are going out of it.

5thly and Laſtly, As Youth is the fitteſt Seaſon for remembring our Creator, and turning unto him, and exerting all the Duties of Chriſtianity with our utmoſt Strength; ſo on the contrary, the Time of *old Age* is the unfiteſt for this Purpoſe; it is very unſeaſonable then to enter upon and fully perform ſuch a Work. *Tully* calls the time of Youth *the good Age*; and in oppoſition to this, the other and laſt part of Man's Life is ſtiled by *Roman* Authors the *evil Age*, and by *Solomon* here the *evil Days, and the Years when we ſhall ſay we have no Pleaſure in them.* Tho' indeed it may be ſaid with Truth, that there are peculiar Helps and Advantages in old Age for Religion and Heaven; there are ſome Graces and Virtues as it were proper to thoſe that are ſtricken in Years, and upon ſeveral Accounts it may be expected that their laſt Days ſhould be their beſt, and moſt ſignaliz'd with Piety, yet (notwithſtanding this) it is not to be denied that the declining Years of Men are generally clogg'd with great Impediments, both as to their Bodies and as to their Souls. The Inconveniences relating to the former, are elegantly diſplay'd by the Wiſe Man in a Metaphorical Way in this Chapter, which is well worth your ſtudying: And the Evils belonging to the latter are no leſs conſiderable; for it uſually happens, that as the Bodily Strength decays, ſo the Reaſon and Underſtanding, and other Faculties of the Soul ſuffer a Declenſion. Thus it is uſually, I ſay, though there are ſome few Exceptions from it. And who then can believe that this is a fit Seaſon for the Exerciſe of active Virtues, and the undergoing the great and difficult Tasks of Repentance and a Holy Life? As *Nicodemus* ſaid, *Can a Man be born when he is Old?* So it may be here ſaid, Can a Man be born again, can he be converted and regenerated after his whole Life hath been ſpent in Sin and the ſervice of the Devil? I do not ſay this is impoſſible, but it is very rare, and there are but few Examples of it. I appeal then to you, whether it be not highly reaſonable and accountable to remember your Creator in the Days of your Youth and Vigor, before thoſe of old Age and Sickneſs arrive; which is the Thing I have been inſiſting upon.

To *apply* all that hath been ſaid, I will addreſs my ſelf, Firſt, to you that are paſt your younger Years. Secondly, To thoſe of you that are in your Youth, and the moſt florid Time of your Life. And thus tho' my Diſcouſe was chiefly deſigned for the Sake of thoſe that are *Young*, yet it will reach you all in one Degree or other; ſo that there will none of you that hear me, but will find your ſelves concerned in what I deliver; and I pray God it may have a powerful Influence on your Lives and Manners. To you of the firſt Rank, *viz.* who are of great maturity of Years, or are come within ſight of old Age, I have a double Word to offer; for either you have practis'd this Leſſon in the Text, or you have not. If you have, *i. e.* if you have been ſeaſon'd with virtuous and godly Principles in your younger Days, and have been kept from the Commiſſion of thoſe Sins which Youth is ſo addicted to; let me remind you of the returning Thanks to God for this ineſtimable Bleſſing; own it as a ſingular Mercy and Favour that your early Years have been dedicated to God, and that by the Aſſiſtance of divine Grace, you have been enabled to perform ſome acceptable Service to him, and to manifeſt the Fruits of the Spirit in a ſanctified Life and Converſation, whilſt ſuch great Numbers as thoſe that were your Fellows in Age, follow'd the corrupt Dictates of their own perverſe Wills, and gave themſelves up to all manner of Lewdneſs and Prophaneneſs, ſome of whom perhaps you ſaw periſh in their Sins.

THE other part of my Addreſs is to thoſe of you of elder Years, that have neglected *Solomon*'s Advice, of *remembring God in your Youth.* Conſider how diſingenuous and unworthy your Carriage hath been. You have given the Devil and the World, and your corrupt Fleſh, the greateſt, the faireſt, the beſt Portion of your Time. Theſe have had your Strength and Vigor; and now will put off your Maker with your impotent and decrepit Age; the Dregs, the *Caput mortuum*, the dry and ſapleſs Remains, the laſt and worſt part of your Life, if it may be call'd a Life which hath nothing of Spirit and Vivacity in it? What can you ſay for your ſelves in this matter? Did the Almighty give you any Cauſe to deal thus with him? You read that under the Law, the fatteſt and the beſt of every Kind was to be offered to the Lord. He fell under a Curſe, who, having in his Flock that which was ſound and whole, yet made an Oblation unto God of the unſound, the diſeaſed or lame. You cannot but ſee how applicable this is to your Caſe, and you muſt needs thence diſcern how baſe and unbecoming your Behaviour towards God hath been. Being throughly apprehenſive of it, bewail it, and lay it to Heart. Beſeech God not to remember the Sins of your Youth, but do not *you* forget them; yea, bear them always in your Mind, that you may be heartily ſorry for them, and ſeriouſly repent of them. It is high Time, but it is not too late to ſeek after God *now.* I remember that * one tells us of *Cato* the Elder, that he would needs learn *Greek* when he was Fourſcore Years Old; and of *Socrates*, that he learnt Muſick when he was very Aged, and gave this Account of it; † *It is better to learn late than to be altogether ignorant.* I wiſh you would apply this Anſwer to better and higher Purpoſes; that is, be not aſham'd to inform your ſelves concerning your Duty, and bluſh

* Stobæus.

† Κρεῖττον ὀψιμαθῆ εἶναι ἢ ἀμαθῆ.

not to practiſe it tho' it be late. Let this encourage you, that there is an Evening as well as a Morning Sacrifice; you having omitted the one, take Care to offer the other with the moſt entire Zeal and Devotion imaginable. Let it be a whole Burnt-offering. You may do much in a ſhort Time, if you ſeek about the Work in good earneſt; therefore make haſte, and improve every Minute, that you may be truly ſaid to *live* whilſt you live. In the next Place, my Diſcourſe turns to you (and you only) who are in your *youthful* Strength and Vigor. Concern your ſelves in *Solomon*'s *Memento, Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth.* Memory is in its full Strength now, and therefore let it be converſant about this deſerved Object of your Thoughts and Remembrance. If you have neglected your Duty, and loſt your Time, and ſpent part of your youthful Days in the Service of Satan and the gratifying of your Luſts; arreſt your ſelves forthwith, and proceed no further in the ways of Sin and Vanity. If what *Solomon* ſpoke in an *ironical* Way hath been taken in good earneſt by you, *i. e.* if *you have walk'd in the ways of your Heart, and in the ſight of your Eyes,* I beſeech you that you will now with inward Regret and Remorſe acknowledge and lament your Miſtake; and let the remaining part of your Youth be wholly ſpent in a faithful Diſcharge of your Duty. Think that of the Apoſtle to be a proper Leſſen for you, * *Flee youthful Luſts,* ſuch Luſts as Youth is moſt incident to.

* 2 Tim. ii. 12.

BUT as for thoſe of you, who have by the Aſſiſtance of Divine Grace kept your ſelves unſpotted from the World, and particularly from the Corruptions of the Age, the reigning Sins and Vices of the Times, and have been faithful to your own Souls, my earneſt Exhortation unto you is that you would continue and perſevere in that good Way wherein you have begun; revolt not from that Truth which you have embrac'd and profeſs'd; abandon not thoſe Holy Laws which you obey'd, and which you have found by Experience to be juſt and good, and in their own Nature amiable and Praiſe-worthy. Have Regard to thy Conſcience, let not that upbraid thee in any Thing. To ſum up all in the Words of an eminent Man, * *Beſtow thy Youth ſo, that thou maiſt have Comfort to remember it when it hath forſaken thee.*

* Sir W. Raleigh's Advice to his Son.

HERE it will be expected I ſhould give you ſome particular Directions how you may effectually put the Text in Practice: Wherefore, that I may not be wanting to you in ſo weighty a Concern, I will commend to you theſe following Things.

1. WITH all Zeal and Fervour implore the divine Aid that you may be enabled to underſtand and perform your Duty aright in this ſlippery Scene of your Life, which is beſet with Snares and Temptations. You cannot direct your own Steps, therefore pray earneſtly to God that he would vouchſafe to be your Guide; that he would lead you into the Ways which are moſt acceptable to him. You daily ſee what Miſcarriages there are in thoſe of your Years, and how miſerable the Iſſue of ſome of them hath been. There are ſad and deplorable Examples before your Eyes in the Places where you live. Beſeech God that you may not be made Examples your ſelves. Beg of Heaven that your Hearts may be inclin'd to Remember, Honour, Love and Serve your Creator betimes. Be daily on your Knees, begging Help of him who alone can help you. With the greateſt Importunity make this your conſtant Requeſt, that your Hearts and Lives may be ſeaſon'd with Grace, that the Tempter may not be able to inveigle you to ungodly and prophane Courſes, but that being fortified by the Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, you may paſs thro' this difficult and hazardous Stage of your Life, with a deep Senſe of Religion in all that you do, and an entire Reſignation of your ſelf to the Will of God.

2. To earneſt Prayer add your ſerious and utmoſt Endeavours. Firſt, Fight, wreſtle, ſtrive againſt your Luſts; make uſe of your Fire and Vigor to this Purpoſe; and conſider this, that if they be not ſubdued when they firſt grow up in you, you will find it difficult to deal with them when they have taken deep Root. And becauſe you cannot effect any Thing ſucceſsfully in Religion if you delight in the Society of bad Men, ſuch as are either idle or ill employ'd; let it be your great Concern to avoid ſuch Aſſociates, and to love and frequent the Company of thoſe that are addicted to Induſtry and Sobriety, and are Lovers of Virtue and Goodneſs.

3. LOOK upon theſe as the greateſt matter of Joy, and the moſt ſatisfactory Pleaſure. *Pleaſure*! That is a Word which is very tuneable, and ſounds melodiouſly in the Ears of Youth. Would you then be Poſſeſſors of true and ſolid Pleaſures, ſee that you gain a familiarity with the ways of Holineſs and divine Wiſdom, for *her ways are ways of Pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are Peace.*

4. CONSULT the ſacred Writ, peruſe the Word of God; this will furniſh you with the chiefeſt Truths, and impartially diſcover your Duty to you. This Glaſs will ſhew you all your Spots and Blemiſhes, and (which no other can do) teach you how to clear your ſelves of them. If it be ask'd, *Wherewith ſhall a young Man cleanſe his Way*, purify his Life, and order his Converſation aright? The anſwer is, that he cannot do it but *by taking heed to his way according to God's Word.* This holy Book corrects thoſe extravagant Notions and Maxims which are generally inſtill'd into Youth, and lets them know that their common Pleas for Licentiouſneſs have no Force in them, but that they ought to curb their boiſterous and impetuous Paſſions, and to devote their earlier Years to the Service of God, and the great Purpoſes of Religion.

5thly and Laſtly, THINK how dangerous a Thing it is to put off Religion and remembring your Creator till your declining Age. There is not a more general, and yet not a more deſtructive Folly than this, that Perſons preſume upon long Life, and promiſe themſelves a laſting continuance in the World, and thereby ruin themſelves and periſh Everlaſtingly. Death, they think, is far off, and they have Time enough before them, and ſo they perſiſt in their Sins, and are on a ſudden ſnatch'd away in the Commiſſion of them. But they ſhould conſider, that they have no reaſon to preſume on long Life, and to put the evil Day far from them, ſeeing it may approach on a ſudden, and unexpectedly overtake them. There are Millions now in Hell who were laviſh of their Hours when they were here on Earth: They perſwaded themſelves that Time was at their beck, and ſo they deferr'd their Repentance, and thereby were loſt for ever. Do not you deſtroy your ſelves by following their Example; let none prevail with you to ſpend your youthful Years in the Proſecution of Vice and Vanity, and to addict the former part of your Life to Satan, with tacit Reſolves of dedicating the latter Portions of it to God's Service; for your Days may juſtly be ſhorten'd for your impious and profane preferring the Devil and his Employment to the Service of your Maker. Men in their laſt Wills and Teſtaments ſay, (becauſe it is a common form and mode of ſpeaking) *they bequeath their Souls to God*; but they ought to be ſerious, and well conſider what the import of ſuch Words are: They are to know that God will not accept of that Legacy, unleſs they had in their Life-time given themſelves to him, and minded the Concern of their Souls. They muſt not diſſemble either with God or Man, but be hearty and ſincere in what they do; and they muſt not think it too ſoon to ſet about this great Work of their Salvation, for the doing of which all their Life is given them, and is all little enough. Set out then betimes in your Chriſtian Journey; ſeek *firſt* the Kingdom of Heaven; conſecrate the prime and flower of your Years to God; give your Bud, your Bloſſom to the Almighty.

Of Self-Denial.

MAT. xvi. 24.

If any Man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs, and follow me.

IT cannot but be a great Solace and Encouragement to us, to conſider, that all the ſound Principles and Sober Maxims among the beſt Moraliſts are to be found in the Chriſtian Inſtitution. The excellent Duties of Temperance and Sobriety, Chaſtity and Purity, Meekneſs and Gentleneſs, Juſtice and Righteouſneſs, and all other moral Virtues and Endowments, are often urg'd and inculcated by our Saviour, by the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts; whatſoever is ſolid and rational is part of our Religion; and upon a ſtrict enquiry it will be found that there are no uſeful Rules and Directions for conducting us in the different conditions of Life, which the beſt Maſters of Morality have commended to the World; there are none of them I ſay, which we may not meet with in the Precepts of the Goſpel. To inſtance in one for all, *Epictetus* that excellent Moraliſt, who, tho in the Condition of a Slave, was yet famous for his Philoſophy; after he had drawn into a narrow Compaſs all the Ethicks of the Ancients, at laſt made an Abbreviation of his own Epitome, and ſhuts up all Morality in two Words, 'Ανέχου ϗ 'Απέχου, *Suſtain* and *Abſtain.* He comprehends all Morals in thoſe two cardinal Virtues, *Fortitude* and *Temperance*; the firſt of which guideth and moderateth the iraſcible part of the Soul; the ſecond the ſenſual or concupiſcible part of it. This ſummarily contains in it all the larger Rules of the Maſters of Ethicks; and this is no other than that which you read in the Text, and is here made authentick and unexceptionable, becauſe it is deliver'd by our Maſter and Teacher: *If any Man* (ſaith he) *will come after me* (i. e. be my Diſciple) *let him deny himſelf* (there he is bid to *Abſtain*,) *and take up his Croſs* (there he is commanded to *Suſtain* and Suffer,) *and* ſo let him *follow me*, let him be my Diſciple.

Obſerve in what *gentle Terms* the Duties are propounded, 'Ει τις, *if any one* will come after me, let him inviolably obſerve theſe Orders. *None* may think themſelves privileg'd that will be Chriſtians; nor Age, nor Sex, nor Quality, no Condition or Kind of Life, nor any thing that is uſually pretended, can exempt you from theſe Duties, or excuſe your Neglect or Omiſſion of them. For here we have the true Notion of a Perſon that is fit and worthy to be admitted into Chriſt's Diſcipleſhip. Here is ſet down the proper and indiſpenſible Quality of every true Follower of Jeſus; he muſt be at his Command, and give himſelf up wholly to his Diſpoſal. Self-denial, and taking up the Croſs, are the firſt Principles and Elements of Chriſtianity. Theſe are the indiſpenſible Conditions of your following of Chriſt; and tho' Fleſh and Blood will plead hard to be excus'd from the Performance of them, yet no Plea and Pretence will be liſtened to by our great Lord and Maſter, who calls us to this Task and Toil.

Firſt then, before we come to the particular diſcuſſing of the Words, let us obſerve here in general the vaſt difference between the Life of a *Chriſtian*, and that which the Devil invites his Servants to. He propoſes Eaſe and Pleaſure to his Followers; he preſents them with Fruit that is delightful to the Eye, that ſtrikes the Fancy, and allures the ſenſual Appetite. He inveigles them with the vain Shew of this World, and bids them *not deny themſelves* the Fruition of any thing that is pleaſant and delightful. He charges them that they fail not to indulge themſelves in all the Sweets and Delicacies of this Life; he would have them take care that they paſs their time in Mirth and Diſports, and not to buſy their Minds with the ſorrowful Cloſe of all. But God propounds a contrary Method to his Servants; the Votaries of the Chriſtian Religion muſt firſt *labour*, and then *reſt*. They muſt grapple with all ſorts of Difficulties whilſt they are here upon Earth. Our Saviour hath no ſuch Baits for his Followers as earthly Pomp and Grandeur, outward Gaiety and Proſperity, or whatever elſe allures the ſenſual Appetite. They cannot ſo learn Chriſt. If they will be his Diſciples they muſt advance againſt many Difficulties and Diſaſters; they muſt thwart and contradict their Deſires; they muſt renounce their own Inclinations and Reaſonings: They muſt meet with many Affronts and Injuries; they muſt be reviled and perſecuted, and undergo the Ignominy of the Croſs, and even lay down their Lives for Chriſt's ſake. The Diſciple of Chriſt is put upon all this hard and tedious Service. *Whoſoever is afraid* (as it was proclaim'd in the Hoſt of *Gideon) muſt return and depart.* Here is no place for the timorous and ſlothful, for either Cowards or Sluggards.

THE Life of a Chriſtian is painful and laborious: He muſt (after St. *Paul*'s Example) *preſs towards the Mark*, ſtrive and contend for the Prize, fight for the Victory, and then there can be no time left for Lazineſs and Loitering. Chriſt propounds to his Followers Life and Bleſſedneſs; but the way to them is uneven and rough. It is a *ſtreight way*; our Saviour himſelf hath told us, a way of *Affliction*, as the * Word properly ſignifies. They muſt, like the *Iſraelites*, take the Wilderneſs in the way to *Canaan*; they muſt make their way to the Kingdom of Heaven thro' many Tribulations. Their Paſſage muſt be forc'd thro' whole Troops of Enemies: There are Giants in this way more terrible than the Sons of *Anak*. As ſoon as thou art a Chriſtian, expect to hear St. *Paul*'s κακοπάθειαν ſounding in thy Ears, *Endure thou hardneſs as a good Soldier of Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Tim. ii. 3. Nothing but Hardſhip is to be look'd for in Soldiery. Here it is that brave Men ſeek for Eaſe in Labour, Delight and Pleaſure in Uneaſineſs, find Food and Refreſhment in Hunger, Reſt and Repoſe in Watchings, and Health in Wounds. It was *Cyrus*'s Care for his Soldiers † that they ſhould never eat but they ſhould ſweat firſt. But this is but little in compariſon, of what the Chriſtian Soldier muſt endure. The Primitive Saints, the whole Army of Martyrs and Confeſſors, and all the Champions of Chriſt's Religion experienc'd a greater Severity. They bore in their Bodies the Mark of the Lord Jeſus, the Scars of Honour which they purchas'd in ſo noble a Cauſe: Many of them did not only ſweat but bleed before they receiv'd their Crown. The Qualifications of our following the Captain of our Salvation are hard and ſevere. *Self-denial and taking up the Croſs* are no eaſy Performance. We muſt manfully encounter all ſorts of Difficulties; we muſt contradict and deny our own Inclinations and Wills; we muſt crucify our Affections, and ſet our Shoulders under the Croſs, and bear it with a patient and contented Spirit. This is the more general Remark on the Words.

* Τεθλιμμένη. Mat.

THE *particular Conditions* of being Chriſt's Diſciples and Followers, are now to be conſider'd *ſeverally* and *diſtinctly*: And the firſt is, *denying our ſelves.* The Obſervation I ſhall entertain you with, is this, that Chriſtian Religion cannot be embraced without Self-denial: Or, it is indiſpenſibly requiſite to a Diſciple of Chriſt to deny himſelf. In Proſecution of this Propoſition I will undertake theſe three things. 1. To ſhew you the *Nature* of this Duty of Self-denial. 2. The *Reaſons* of it. 3. The *Means* and *Helps* in order to the attaining of it.

Firſt, I am to ſhew you the Nature of this Duty. The *Greek* Word which we tranſlate [*let him deny*] imports a ſtrong Repulſe, a violent Renouncing, a vehement Denial. It is not gently to check, (as old *Eli* did his wicked Sons, ſaying, *Why do ye ſuch Things?*) but it denotes a ſevere diſcountenancing and diſowning. The *plucking out of the right Eye*, and *the cutting off the right Hand*, and *caſting them from us* (as our Saviour phraſes it in his excellent Sermon on the

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† Μήποτε ἀνίδρωτοι ἐπὶ τὸ ἄριστον ϗ τὸ δεῖπνον εἰσιέναι. Xen.

Mount) *mortifying our Members which are on the Earth, and crucifying the Fleſh with the Affections and Luſts* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks in his Epiſtles to the *Coloſſians* and *Galaltians*) theſe are ſeveral Expreſſions to ſet forth the ſame thing, namely, to repreſent to us the true Nature of this Important Duty of *denying our ſelves.*

Soul and *Body* make up *our ſelves*, and conſequently the Powers, Inclinations and Appetites of both are to be reſtrain'd: And becauſe the Mind and outward Man are influenc'd upon by *external Objects*, theſe alſo muſt in their due Meaſure be denied and renounc'd. In theſe three Things then doth conſiſt the evangelical Grace of Self-denial, 1. In correcting the Faculties of the Soul. 2. In regulating the bodily and ſenſual Inclinations. 3. (In conſequence of that) In the due managing of our ſelves as to all the external Objects we converſe with.

First, THE *Operations of the Soul* are to be look'd after in the firſt Place; and amongſt them the *Underſtanding* is the leading and principal Faculty; and therefore if this be taken care of, the reſt will be more eaſily governed. But what is it to deny or renounce our Underſtandings? I do not mean that we ſhould lay aſide the Uſe of them, as *Evagrius* tells us of one who knew himſelf to be Maſter of great Wiſdom and Worth, and that he might not be vain-glorious, ever acted the part of a Fool when he came into Company. You may be ſure I intend not any thing of this Nature. But that which I mean is this, we muſt reſtrain this Power of our Souls (the Underſtanding) by denying a liberty of prying into things either *unprofitable* or *unlawful.*

1. SUCH Things as are *unprofitable* and *uſeleſs* to us. Which *Tully* expreſſeth very well, * This is a common Fault (ſaith he) among Men, that they buſy their Brains about obſcure and difficult Matters, and ſuch as are not neceſſary for the uſe of Life. They ſtudy to underſtand thoſe Things, the Knowledge whereof, if we had an inſight into them, would not be any ways advantageous to us, or the laborious and exact Study whereof falls not within the compaſs of our Calling, but is rather a hinderance to our conſcientious Diſcharge of it. It is abſurd and childiſh to be inquiſitive here, ſince ſo many admirable Things, and thoſe worthy of our Knowledge, are ſet before us by God, in which we may exerciſe ourſelves with unſpeakable Delight and Profit. But thoſe nice and fond Speculations, trifling and impertinent, wanton and curious Diſquiſitions, in ranging after which, the Mind is diverted from the more ſolemn Employment of Religion, are no ways worthy of a Chriſtian.

2. MUCH more doth it become us to check ourſelves in our enquiring after Things that are *unlawful* for us to pry into; and thoſe are either *Diabolical Arts*, or *Divine Secrets.* The former are to be reckon'd among thoſe *Works of the Devil*, which *the Son of God came on purpoſe to deſtroy.* Accordingly we read, that many of the Believers at *Epheſus*, who before had uſed curious Arts, brought their Books together and burnt them. The *Epheſians* indeed are repreſented in the moſt authentick Authors as great Practitioners in the Magick Art; inſomuch that their curſed Pranks became a Proverb, and were call'd the † *Learning of the Epheſians.* Theſe Studies are ſtiled by the Apoſtle *Curious*, becauſe defiled and prophane Minds are wont to buſy themſelves with great *Curioſity* about theſe Matters; they are very anxious and ſolicitous about theſe Depths of Satan. But ſanctified Minds decline the ſtudying of theſe impious and diabolical Myſteries, following the Example of the *Epheſian* Converts, who condemned the Volumes of their Black Art to the Flames. No Excuſe can legitimate our inquiſitive Search into theſe helliſh Intrigues, and our familiar converſing with them.

† Ἐφέσια γράμματα.

AND the latter (I mean *Divine Secrets*) are to be admired and adored, not wantonly pried into. Theſe abſtruſe and profound Intricacies are not arrogantly to be ranſack'd, leſt they confound us with their mighty Depth, and quite overwhelm us with their Glory. We muſt not think to bring down theſe lofty Things to the level of our ſhallow Capacities: We muſt not criticiſe here, but believe. I may ſay to the bold Intruder into God's Secrets, as our Saviour to St. *Peter*, when he was deſirous to pry into the Horoſcope of the beloved Diſciple,

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[*] *Alternum eſt vitium quòd quidam nimis magnum ſtudium multamque operam in res obſcuras atquedifficiles conferunt, eaſdemque non neceſſarias.* De Offic. lib. 1.

What is that to thee? Why doſt thou dive into unſearchable Myſteries, and art ambitious to be Privy Counſellor to the Majeſty of Heaven? Why doſt thou take upon thee to pronounce as poſitively of the moſt hidden and conceal'd Matters, as if with St. *Paul*, the other World's *Columbus*, thou hadſt been rapt up into the third Heaven, and as if thou hadſt turn'd over all the Volumes of the Divine Decrees, and hadſt exactly copied out the Book of Life? Be abaſh'd, fond Man, at thy intolerable Folly: Preſume not to be *Wiſe above that which is written*: Search not into the Secrets which the All-wiſe God hath kept to himſelf, and is pleas'd that the Inhabitants of this lower World ſhould be ignorant of. *It is not for you to know the Times and Seaſons which the Father hath put into his own Power*, as our Saviour told the inquiſitive Apoſtles. The firſt Sin which broke into the World, was fond Curioſity, an affecting of greater Knowledge than God thought fit to reveal. Our firſt unhappy Mother deſtroy'd her ſelf, and her Poſterity too, by her too greedy Deſire to know Good and Evil: And we all inherit this deprav'd Appetite, the Affectation of forbidden Knowledge, which is a thing, not only vain, but proves extremely hurtful to us. It will concern us then to deny our ſelves in ſo important a Caſe, and to remember that we muſt not gaze on ſome myſterious Objects, leſt our Eyes be dazzled, and we at laſt be blinded.

See Jacob the first born

IT is true, Reaſon is the Firſt-born, the eldeſt and nobleſt of the Faculties; and yet you muſt not refuſe to offer up this Darling, to ſacrifice this *Iſaac.* Let not *Reaſon* perſwade you to ſearch with boldneſs into thoſe Myſteries which are inſcrutable, and which ought to be entertain'd with Silence and Veneration. It ſhould be part of the Character of a Chriſtian, which *Tacitus* ſaith of *Julius Agricola*, that * he knew how to retain a Mean in Knowledge; which is a very difficult thing. But *we* muſt do this in a higher and better manner: For we are to be ſenſible of this, that ſome Secrets are *deſignedly* placed above our reach by the Divine Appointment, that we may not buſy our Thoughts about them. They are purpoſely ſhut up cloſe from our View: Wherefore to endeavour to open and unlock them, is unpardonable Arrogance and Preſumption. It is Rudeneſs as well as Impiety to enquire curiouſly into that which is on purpoſe conceal'd. The old Saying of the *Jewiſh* Doctors is very commendable, namely, that we muſt not enquire into the Reaſon why God did this or that. We renounce all Modeſty and Humility, when we attempt to fathom this Abyſs. And therefore let us ever bear upon our Minds, that excellent Caution of the meek *Moſes*, *Secret Things belong unto the Lord, but thoſe which are reveal'd belong unto us, and to our Children*, Deut. xxix. 29. With which agrees that admirable Advice of the Wiſe Son of *Sirach*, *Seek not out Things that are too hard for thee, neither ſearch the Things that are above thy Strength; but what is commanded thee think thereupon with Reverence; for it is not needful for thee to ſee with thine Eyes the Things that are in ſecret*, Eccl. iii. 21, 22. Submit to what is reveal'd, and be not ſo hardy and preſumptuous as to rifle God's Ark, to break into the Holy of Holies, to think to penetrate into the hidden Councils and Purpoſes of Heaven. It is certain, that there is a ſufficient Stock of Knowledge to be deriv'd from thoſe divine Truths which are *reveal'd* to us, wherefore let us ſtudy *them*. Beſides, the Works of *Nature* are fraught with much curious Knowledge. And in the Works of *Providence* there is yet a more wonderful Learning to be had. But even in theſe we muſt not be over nice and curious; we muſt endeavour to know what is fitting for us to know, or what may be uſeful and profitable to us in this Life, and what may beſt capacitate us for the Enjoyment of God in another.

AND as for the Myſteries of the *Goſpel*, it is certain that the Freedom of our Intellects, and the Juriſdiction of our natural Reaſon are to be limited, namely by the Laws of Faith, and the Rules of evangelical Belief. To ſay with *Nicodemus*, *How can theſe things be?* is childiſh and impertinent, and is addreſſing our ſelves to Chriſtianity, as he came to Chriſt *by Night*, and ſhutting our Eyes againſt the Light and Diſcoveries of ſupernatural Revelation. *Reaſon* cannot diſcover it ſelf more than in ſubmitting to Things that are above the Level of Reaſon. We are oblig'd to ſtifle our fooliſh and ſhallow Conceptions of divine Matters, our undue Notions and Apprehenſions concerning reveal'd Truths; our proud and conceited Opinions and Prejudices againſt Religion; our fond Reaſonings and Arguings; our perverſe Perſwaſions about heavenly Objects. If any Man ſeemeth to be wiſe in this World, let him be a Fool, that he may be wiſe, ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor*. iii. 18. You ſee there are quite other Meaſures to be taken than are generally made uſe of. Human Knowledge and *Philoſophy* (which gave Men the denomination of *Wiſe*, to which it is probable the Apoſtle here alludes) muſt vail to the Wiſdom of God, and the Dictates of the infallible Oracles of the Goſpel. We muſt renounce our own vain Wit and Judgment, and wholly reſign them to the divine Authority, to the Word of God, and the plain Diſcoveries which are made there. Thus this Faculty of our *Underſtanding* is to be kept within its Bounds. Therefore I conceive I have rightly here placed the firſt Inſtance of Self-denial; the Underſtanding being (as I ſaid before) the leading Principle, the Eye of the Soul, which muſt direct it in all its Actions. Therefore I have the longer inſiſted on this.

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* *Retinuit (quod eſt difficillimum) ex ſcientiâ modum.*

AND I have done ſo the rather, becauſe I ſee what Oppoſition is made by ſome againſt this. * *Crellius* and the reſt of the *Socinians* generally tell us, that the Injunction of Chriſt, *Let a Man deny himſelf*, is meant only of a Man's *Body* or *Life*: That they ſay, is *himſelf* here. A late Writer and Preacher among our ſelves will not allow that the Denial of a Man's Reaſon in ſome Matters of Faith is part of the Chriſtian Self-denial. He is peremptory † that *this is not to be brought under this Precept of Self-denial, and it was never intended by our Saviour.* Yea, he adds, *It is ſo apparently and groſly unreaſonable, that 'tis a wonder that any one ſhould ever take this for an Inſtance of that Self-denial which our Saviour requires; eſpecially conſidering that in all his Diſcourſes of Self-denial, he doth not ſo much as glance at this Inſtance, or any thing like it.* Now I will briefly let the Reader ſee, that there is no Ground at all for what this Writer ſo confidently ſuggeſts. There are but three places wherein the Duty of *Self-denial* is mention'd, namely in the Text before us, and in *Mark* viii. 34, and in *Luke* ix. 23. and in all theſe places this Duty hath an immediate reference to the denying and renouncing of carnal Reaſon; for you will find that this Injunction is occaſion'd by our Saviour's ſpeaking to his Diſciples concerning his *Sufferings* and *Death*, and is grounded on St. *Peter*'s *rebuking* him; *Be it far from thee, Lord: This ſhall not be unto thee.* Whereupon Chriſt roundly told him, that *he ſavour'd not the Things that were of God*, but thoſe that were of Men; that is, he ſpoke and acted according to the Suggeſtions of human Reaſon, and not according to the Dictates of divine Wiſdom. Whereupon it is immediately added in the next Verſe, *Then ſaid Jeſus unto his Diſciples, if any Man will come after me, let him deny himſelf.* As much as to ſay, if any one will be my Diſciple, he muſt not talk and behave himſelf as *Peter* now did, following merely the Dictates of carnal Wiſdom, but he muſt renounce ſuch corrupt Wiſdom and Reaſon as this, and captivate his Underſtanding to the Obedience of Faith.

carnal reason

THUS it is evident, that denying of our ſhallow Reaſon in matters of Faith and ſupernatural Diſcoveries is juſtly to be reduced to this Command of our Saviour; ſo that I may ſay, in return to what Dr. *Tillotſon* ſaid, that *it is a Wonder that any one ſhould ever deny this to be an inſtance of that Self-denial which our Saviour requires.* And we ſee that this Writer had little Reaſon to ſay, that Chriſt *doth not ſo much as glance at this Inſtance*, whereas it is plain that he directly mentions this very Thing. But in this (as in ſome other Things) he ſymbolizes with the Partizans of *Socinus*, who make a great ſhew of *humane Reaſon*, to extirpate our *Faith*.

HEREIN he diſſents from the wiſeſt Heads in *Chriſtendom*, and thoſe that have had the Eſteem of being the moſt profound Reaſoners. They have in all Ages of Chriſtianity ſubmitted their Reaſons to Faith, and have proclaim'd it moſt reaſonable ſo to do. I will mention one notable Paſſage out of the Writings of a great Man, || [God's Sovereignty, ſaith he, reaches to the whole Man, extending it ſelf no leſs to his *Reaſon* than his *Will*; ſo that it well becomes Man to deny

|| D. Verulam. de Augment. Scient. l. 9.

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* *Explicat. diffic. loc.* N. T.

† Dr. *Tillotſon*'s Serm. Vol. 1.

himſelf univerſally, and yield up all to him. Wherefore as we are bound to obey the Law of God, notwithſtanding the reluctancy of our Will (as I ſhall ſhew under the next Particular) ſo alſo are we to believe his Word, tho' againſt the Reluctancy of our Reaſon.] And I will add this out of another, no leſs remarkable, || [The Reaſon of Man, ſaith he, in many Things knows nothing but the Face of the Article; in all which Caſes our Underſtanding is to ſubmit, and not to enquire further. But if it will not conſent to a Revelation, until it ſee a Reaſon of the Propoſition, it doth not obey at all; for it will not ſubmit till it cannot chuſe.] This gives a brief Account of *Self-denial*, as it hath a particular Relation to the *Underſtanding* or *Reaſon*.

|| Biſhop Taylor. Duct. Dub. Book 1. Chap. 2.

THIS being rectified, the *Will* (which is the next conſiderable Operation of the Mind) will follow its conduct, and become regular and orderly. This elective Power which hath ſo great an Influence and Command on all our Actions, depends wholly on the right Government of the Perception and rational Power, and therefore having diſtinctly bounded this, the other will eaſily come into good Order. For now the *Will* being bleſs'd with ſuch a Guide and Maſter, will ſoon become obſequious, and all its Perverſeneſs will be tamed and reduced; its former Reluctancies and Hoſtilities will be laid aſide, and it will entirely ſurrender and give up it ſelf to the divine Will. This *Self-denial*, as it reſpects the *Will*, is comprehended in theſe two Things, namely, our ſubmitting to what God *doth*, and to what he *commands*. Firſt, The Will muſt ſhew it ſelf ſubmiſſive as to what God *doth*. Whatſoever he is pleaſed to effect in the World, whether it relate to the Publick, or to our private Concerns, we muſt acquieſce in it; and although it ſeems ſtrange, and unaccountable to us, yet we are not to diſlike it, but to approve of it as the Act of God, which is always done with the greateſt Reaſon and Wiſdom: This ought to be our humble Language; Let God do as he pleaſeth, let his Will take Place in all the Affairs and Tranſactions of the World. It is our Duty to reſign our ſelves to his Providence, to ſubmit to his Dealings in all Things, and to ſay with the greateſt freeneſs and willingneſs, *Not our Will*, but *His Will be done*.

Secondly, WE are obliged to deny our Wills, not only as to what God *doth*, but as to what he *commands*; that is, whatever he enjoins us to do, although it ſeems never ſo difficult and harſh, we ought moſt readily to comply with. It was excellently ſaid by a † great and good Man, [If God ſhould require Obedience to any Command, tho' I ſaw no reaſon for it, yet the Love of God would conſtrain me to reaſon thus: Though I ſee no reaſon of this Command, yet when I conſider who it is that commands it, even the infinite and merciful God, to whom I owe my ſelf and all I hope for; I ſee reaſon enough for me to obey, tho' I ſee not the Reaſon why God ſhould command.] If we are once ſatisfied that the Thing is God's Will, it is enough. The divine Precepts are not to be diſputed by us; we may ſay as Chriſt himſelf hath taught us, *Thy Will be done*. Thou haſt commanded it, and that alone lays a neceſſity upon us to perform it. It is thy Pleaſure that this ſhould be done, therefore we renounce our own Wills to conform to thine. Thus this Faculty of the Soul is to be wholly guided by God and his Laws.

† Judge Hale's Meditat. on Lord's Prayer.

AND that you may the more carefully attend to this, remember that though the intellectual Faculty being diſorder'd and corrupted is very pernicious, yet this of the Will is much more ſo, and if it continue in its Refractorineſs proves the Ruin of Mankind. Indeed, this is the only Thing which ſets us at Enmity againſt God, and God againſt us, *viz.* that we are bent upon having our own Wills; and hence it is that this ſtubborn Will of ours deſtroys us. Wherefore, you are greatly concern'd to curb and maſter this headſtrong Faculty of the Soul, and always to ſet before you, and urge upon you the reveal'd Will of God, and to direct all your Actions by it, and humbly to reſign your ſelves to the divine Pleaſure and Diſpoſal in all Things. Thus a Man muſt deny his Will; yea, in the foremention'd Reſpects he muſt have no Will of his own. But becauſe I ſpoke ſo largely of the firſt Part of *Self-denial*, I will be more ſparing in this, and in that which follows.

IN the next place then, the *Affections* are to be *denied*, for theſe are part of a Man's *ſelf*. We have made way for this part of *Self-denial* by what we have deliver'd already; for the two principal Functions of the Soul (*viz.* the *Underſtand-*

ing and the *Will*) being rectified, the *Affections* cannot but ſhew themſelves obedient to them, and abſolutely own their Dominion and Sovereignty. All then that I ſhall ſay under this Head is this, that *Self-denial* is a reſtraining and moderating of all our inordinate *Paſſions*; as the wild Emotions of *Anger* and *Choler*; the Exorbitancies of *Fear* and *Dread*; the violent Sallies of undue *Love* and *Hatred*; the impetuouſneſs of *Joy* and *Grief*; of *Delight* and *Sorrow*, which latter are (as *Plutarch* ſaith well) * the Nails which faſten the Soul to the Body, and are the cauſe of that near Communication that is between them, for which reaſon theſe muſt be chiefly look'd to. But indeed, *All* of them ought to be tutor'd and kept in order: Their Extravagancies muſt be allay'd and charmed, for it is not fit the ſuperior Faculties ſhould truckle to theſe inferior Ones: It is abſurd and ridiculous that the Beaſt ſhould ride the Man, and the Slave domineer over the Maſter, and the brutiſh Part have Dominion over the rational and divine: This muſt not be; thoſe baſe and vile Affections (as the Apoſtle calls them) muſt be brought to acknowledge their Vileneſs and Inferiority, and they muſt not be ſuffer'd any longer to uſurp over the higher Powers of the Soul, but they muſt become tributary to them. To accompliſh this hath been ever reckon'd the proper Task of *Moral Philoſophy*; for Virtue is a conquering of the animal Impreſſions and exorbitant Paſſions. And behold! This is much more the Work of *Chriſtianity*, and the proper effect and reſult of *Self-denial*. This excellent Grace (becauſe there is ſo near and intimate a Conjunction between our *Souls* and *Bodies*) exerts it ſelf in the connecting of the corporal and ſenſual Appetites. Which leads me to the

Second main Ingredient of the Duty of *Self-denial*, viz. THE reſtraining and moderating the *bodily* and *ſenſual Deſires*. The corrupt Inclinations and Propenſions of our Fleſh are to be ſubdued; the carnal Motions which our worſer Part is ſubject to muſt be tamed, and brought under the Regency of that part which is Higher and Nobler. Thus is that expreſs'd by the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor* ix. 7. *I keep under my Body, and bring it into Subjection.* The firſt Word that the Apoſtle here uſes, is a Metaphor taken from Champions who uſed to fight with leaden Plumets, and therewith bruiſed one another. Or, if you read the Word (as ſome † Copies do, it alludes to thoſe Wreſtlers who having once thrown down their Adverſaries, kept them under, and ſuffered them not to recover themſelves and riſe again. The * other Word here uſed plainly ſignifies a bringing into Bondage, a reducing to Slavery. Such, ſuch is the Power and Dominion we are to exerciſe over our carnal Part, and is that which is meant by the ſame Holy Champion, in *Col.* iii. 5. *Mortify your Members which are upon the Earth, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, inordinate Affections, evil Concupiſcence.* Theſe are to be mortified and ſubdued by a ſevere Diſcipline on the outward Man.

† Ὑποπιέζει.

* Δουλαγωγῶ.

AND this Diſcipline conſiſts in ſetting a ſtrict Guard and Watch over the *bodily Senſes*; for theſe are * *ſo many Doors that open to Life or Death*, as the *Jewiſh* Maſters ſay well. Sin entred firſt by the Eye; *Eve ſaw* the Fruit, that it was delightful to *look on*, and thereupon ſhe violated the Command of the Almighty. *David ſaw Bathſheba* (tho' at a diſtance) and thence proceeded to the Commiſſion of Murder and Adultery. The Sight is generally the Inlet to all Vice; and therefore Chriſt ſaith, *if thine Eye be Evil, the whole Body will be full of Darkneſs.* (Tho' I know thoſe Words may be interpreted in another Senſe.) *Homer* was not blind, ſaith *Suidas*, but becauſe he was not given to *Luſt*, which begins with the *Eyes*, he had that Name; as if to be void of Sight and Luſt were the ſame. There muſt be therefore eſpecial Care taken of this, there muſt be *Self-denial* in the *Eye* or *Sight*. Thus *Job made a Covenant with his*: And that good King, who had offended with his Eyes, prays unto God to *turn them away from beholding Vanity.* The exact and pure Inſtitutes of Chriſtianity forbid us to *look upon a Woman to luſt after her.* Or if our right Eye ſhould wander, and in this caſe offend, we are commanded by our Saviour, *to pluck it out, and caſt it from us.*

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* Ὁ γὰρ ἡδονῆς καὶ ἀλγηδόνος ἧλος ὃς πρὸς τὸ σῶμα τὴν ψυχὴν προσηλοῖ. Sympoſ. l. 8.

* Quinque ſenſus hominis ſunt velut quinque Oſtia, quibus ad locum vitæ vel mortis introducitur homo. *Heb. Prov.*

ECCLESIASTICAL Hiſtory tells us, that one *Amiantus*, a Diſciple of St. *Mark* the Evangeliſt, and afterwards Bp. of *Alexandria*, interpreted that Command of Chriſt in a literal Senſe, and thereupon reſolutely deprived himſelf of half his Sight, he having too often found that Senſe to be ſtraying and wanton. But this was an indiſcreet and raſh Action, and was a miſinterpreting of our Saviour's Words; beſides, the pulling out of one of his Eyes was not the way to prevent laſcivious Looking, when he kept the other Eye open. But the true and genuine Senſe of thoſe Words is this; that if we find the bodily Eye to be an inlet to Luſt, we muſt be careful to keep it from holding converſe with thoſe Objects which we know are enticing; we muſt as it were *pluck it out* by ſuffering it not to behold them, or if at any Time it doth, we muſt as it were *weep it out*, quench the unlawful Fire with penitential Tears. Becauſe the Eyes are apt to be defiled with ſinful Objects, we muſt therefore waſh and purify them by ſhedding of godly Tears: To which purpoſe *Bellarmin* applies the Pſalmiſt's Words (though with palpable diſtorting of them) *Rivers of Waters run down mine Eyes, becauſe they* (i. e. mine Eyes, ſaith he,) *keep not thy Laws*, they let in Sin by unlawful Glances; wherefore you are obliged to guard this Senſe, and not to gaze on thoſe Objects which uſually tempt and raviſh the Eye, and thereby corrupt and debauch the Mind. * Shut your Eyes then, and thereby your Souls will be at Reſt, as the *Hebrew* Doctors are pleas'd to ſpeak.

IF the Motions of *Intemperance* be urgent and ſollicitous with us, the Wiſe Man hath furniſhed us with an Antidote, *Prov.* xxiii. 31. [*Look not upon the Wine when it is red*, when it *giveth its Colour in the Cup, when it moveth itſelf aright.*] As before, we were bid *not to look on a Woman*, ſo here, *not to look upon the Wine*, for the ſight of it may tempt us to Exceſs and Intemperance. But *Solomon* expreſſeth his Senſe in a more auſtere Language, in the *Second Verſe* of that *Chap. Put a Knife unto thy Throat, if thou be a Man given to Appetite.* In the *Hebrew* it is, *If thou be Maſter of Appetite.* But you muſt know, that the Word which is here uſed hath various Significations in the Holy Writ. The *Maſter* or *Lord* of a Thing denotes, 1. The *Poſſeſſor* of it; Or, 2dly. Simply him that *hath* ſuch a Thing; Or, 3dly. Him that *hath any Thing to do with it*; Or, 4thly. Who *belongs to* ſuch a Thing; Or, 5thly. Is *endued with it*; Or, 6thly. Is *ſubject and addicted to* ſuch a Thing: The laſt Senſe is frequent in Scripture, as in *Gen.* xxxvii. 19. *Joſeph* is call'd † *the Maſter of Dreams* (as the Margin of your Bibles rightly renders it) *i. e.* one who is addicted to Dreams, and hath many of them: Thus in *Prov.* xxii. 24. we are bid to make no Friendſhip with *an Angry Man*: In the *Hebrew* it is ‖ *a Maſter of Anger*, i. e. one who is much given to Anger, one that is ſtrongly inclin'd to Paſſion. So here, ∴ *a Maſter of Appetite* is one that is hugely ſubject and liable to that Vice of indulging his Appetite, and pleaſing his Palate: Such a one, ſaith the Wiſe Man, *muſt put a Knife to his Throat*, i. e. he muſt with great Violence reſtrain and bridle his deſire of eating: So that you ſee here the *Senſe of Taſting* (as well as that of *Seeing*, before ſpoken of) is to be guarded, and ſtrictly look'd after. We muſt not permit this Senſe to be extravagant and wanton, leſt it betray us to Gluttony and Luxury. *The Knife* muſt be made uſe of; the meaning is, we muſt wound our Bodies rather than feed and pamper our exorbitant Appetite.

† Bagnal hacalomoth.

‖ Bagnal aph.

∴ Bagnal nepheſh.

THE *Senſe of Hearing* alſo muſt be mortified and reſtrained, for this is another Door at which Sin and Death do enter. We read that *Polycarp* uſed to ſtop his Ears at the wicked Speeches of Hereticks. The like is to be done by us; we are to be careful that we give no Ear to thoſe who are wont to be irreligious, prophane and blaſphemous in their Diſcourſes; or whoſe Talk is uſually laſcivious and obſcene, or who make it their Practice to entice and allure Men to Sin. Stop your Ears, and be like the deaf Adder; when they begin to charm, liſten not to their Lectures of Folly and Vice. In ſhort, ſo govern *all* your *outward Senſes*, that they may not rove after unlawful and forbidden Objects. Make them ſerviceable for that which without doubt Providence deſign'd them to; namely, to guard us from Vice. But ſince theſe external Senſes of our Bodies are abus'd and perverted, ſince our very Centinels betray our Forts, we muſt now be careful to double our Guards, and even to ſet a Watch over our Keepers. Stop up all the Paſſages and Avenues of Vice, eſpecially block up theſe *Cinque Ports* by which the Adverſary uſes to make his Entrance. In a word, let nothing *without thee* commit a rape upon thy Soul: But if it perſiſts to ſollicite and diſturb thee, wholly renounce it, utterly deny it. Which brings me to the Conſideration of the

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* Quicunque oculos ſuos claudit, animum ſuum quieſcere faciet.

Third thing I propos'd, in order to the explaining of the Nature of *Self-denial*, viz. that we muſt give a Repulſe to all *External Invitations* whatſoever, whereby we are wont to be drawn off from our Duty. And of this ſort are,

1. Those which our Saviour takes particular notice of and warns us againſt, *Luke* xiv. 26. *If any Man comes to me, and hates not his Father and Mother, and Wife and Children, and Brethren and Siſters, he cannot be my Diſciple.* It muſt not, it can't be thought that natural Affection is here condemn'd by our Lord; for the Chriſtian Law aboliſhes not that of Nature. Theſe Words of Chriſt, are not to be meant in an abſolute and unreſtrain'd Senſe, as if we were bound to hate and abhor *our* Relations and Kinsfolks: But this certainly our Saviour means, that thoſe near and beloved Relations are to be deſpis'd and diſregarded *when* they hinder us from embracing of him, and cloſing with the Offers of Salvation. The Bonds of Nature oblige us to love our Relations, but the Injunctions of the Goſpel engage us to love our Souls, and Chriſt much more: Accordingly we find our Saviour thus interpreting himſelf, *Mat.* x. 37. *He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me: And he that loveth Son or Daughter more than me is not worthy of me.* A *comparative Hatred* is here intended: Or we are to diſregard them ſo far as they hinder us from ſerving our dear Maſter and Redeemer. If there be a compariſon or competition between the neareſt Relatives and the bleſſed Jeſus, then *thoſe that have Wives, Children, &c. muſt be as if they had none*; they muſt diſown them for the ſake of their dear Lord. Severe was the Law, which you read in *Deut.* xiii. 6, 7. *If thy Brother, the Son of thy Mother, or thy Son or thy Daughter, or the Wife of thy Boſom, or thy Friend, which is as thy own Soul, entice thee, ſaying, Let us go and ſerve other gods; thou ſhalt not conſent unto him, nor hearken unto him, neither ſhall thy Eye pity him, neither ſhalt thou ſpare, neither ſhalt thou conceal him, but thou ſhalt ſurely kill him, thine Hands ſhalt be firſt upon him to put him to death.* This is very harſh, you'll ſay: But we are ſure that there could not be any Breach of natural Affection in a caſe wherein God himſelf was pleas'd to preſcribe to that People, as this was. They were not to take notice of, and ſhew any reſpect to their neareſt Kindred, ſuppoſing they tempted them to Idolatry. Their natural Affection was to give way to Religion, and they were not to be kind to thoſe who rebell'd againſt God. Under the *Goſpel* this prevails in its due Meaſure and Proportion, namely when thoſe who are your Friends and Intimates, and nearly related to you, endeavour to eſtrange you from God, and ſollicite you to break off your Alliance to Religion: Then you muſt know no Kindred, no Relation.

Who ſees not that Perſons are apt to be perverted by their near Relatives? The firſt and early Deceit was by this Means. *Adam*, through the Enticement of his Wife violated the divine Command. * *Solomon* was corrupted by his Wives, † and *Jehoram* was miſled by his. So it is particularly recorded of *Ahab*, who ſold himſelf to work wickedneſs, that ‖ *his Wife ſtirr'd him up*. *Conſtantine* the Great, in his latter Days, by the Inſtigation of his Siſter *Conſtantia*, who favour'd the *Arians*, baniſh'd good *Athanaſius*, and ſent for *Arius* out of Exile, and favour'd his Party. The Emperor *Valentinian*, by the impuſe and artifice of his Mother *Juſtinia* was harſh to the orthodox Chriſtians, and countenanc'd the *Arians*. *Valens* was corrupted by his Lady, who was an *Arian*, and made him ſuch a one as herſelf. *Juſtinian* the Emperor was wrought upon by his Queen *Theodora*, who had a kindneſs for the *Eutychian* Hereſy. *Irene*, who was Empreſs with her Son, another *Conſtantine*, caus'd him to favour the Worſhip of Images, ſhe being for it herſelf: And then the ſecond *Nicene* Council was held, which decreed the Adoration of Images. And there are almoſt innumerable other Inſtances to prove that Perſons are apt to be biaſs'd and led away from their Duty by the powerful Enchantments of their belov'd Relations.

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* 1 Kings xi. 4. † 2 Kings viii. 18. ‖ 1 Kings xxi. 25.

But he that hath attain'd to that part of Self-denial, which I am now treating of, will not liſten to theſe Charmers, tho' they charm never ſo cunningly. The neareſt Friends and Kindred muſt be repuls'd, when they invite to Sin and Vanity. A moſt remarkable Example of this you have in St. *Jerom*, who utter'd Words to this purpoſe, [Tho' my Father ſhould caſt himſelf on the threſhold which I am to paſs over, and lie there weeping before me; tho' my Mother ſhould claſp her Arms about my Neck, and hang behind me; tho' my Brethren, Siſters and Kindred ſhould encompaſs me on every ſide, and all theſe ſhould endeavour to perſwade me to renounce my Saviour, and to abandon my Duty, and to lead a ſinful Life; I would tread upon my aged Father, I would trample upon my indulgent Mother, and I would diſregard all my dear Friends and Kindred, and with dry Eyes, void of all pity and compaſſion, I would fly to my Lord's Banner, under which I am to fight, and am ſure to overcome.] This was the brave Reſolve of that good Man: He counted it Piety and Religion to be hard-hearted, and as it were cruel in ſuch a caſe.

2. *Self-Denial* muſt ſhew it ſelf in renouncing of vain Glory, and all inordinate Deſires of Honours and Preferments. The Epiſcopal Chair hath been uneaſy to ſome, becauſe their Minds were free from ambitious Thoughts and coveting of high Places. *Clemens* refus'd to be *Peter*'s Succeſſor in the Chair at *Rome*, and preferr'd *Linus* and *Cletus* before himſelf (yet becauſe *Clemens* was deſign'd by *Peter*, therefore ſome reckon him the immediate Succeſſor of *Peter*.) If this be true (as I cannot vouch it, but only offer to you what ſome Writers of the Church report) Biſhopricks were refus'd betimes, tho' at that time indeed they were no very tempting Things, becauſe they were attended with Perſecution; but afterwards there was worldly Honour and Advantage annex'd to them: And even *then* we read that ſome Self-denying Perſons would not accept of them. *Ambroſe* was preparing for flying, when he was like to be choſen Biſhop of *Milan*. *Baſil* the Great hid himſelf: *Chryſoſtom* declin'd it as much as he could. *Gregory Nazianzen*, when he was preferr'd to the Biſhoprick of *Conſtantinople*, ſoon reſign'd it and retir'd to a ſolitary Life at *Nazianzum*. *Euſebius* refus'd to be Biſhop of *Antioch*. *Ammonius Perota* (mention'd by *Socrates*) cut off one of his Ears, that by that means he might avoid the being preferr'd to a Biſhoprick; for voluntary Maiming themſelves in thoſe Days made them uncapable of that Office. Nay, we are [*] told, that a good Father died with Fear as they were bearing him to his Epiſcopal Throne. He died for dread of that which others ſo long for, and are like to die becauſe they miſs of it. When *John Fiſher*, the devout Biſhop of *Rocheſter*, was proffer'd by King *Henry* 8. a more wealthy Biſhoprick, he refus'd it, ſaying, *Let others have their more plentiful Incomes, for my part I am content with this which I have; I will not change my little old Wife, to whom I have been ſo long wedded, for a Richer.* (Though this Inſtance, I confeſs, may ſeem more properly to belong to the 4th Particular which I ſhall ſpeak of anon.) They tell us, that *Cardinal Pool* might have been choſen Pope, but he modeſtly waved it. He was the firſt ſurely that ever did ſo.

Though I cannot in all Points commend theſe Perſons, and their Practices, which I have related to you; yet take them in groſs, and they may be uſeful to us, to remind us of the Duty of the Text. If the true Spirit of *Self-denial* reign in us, we ſhall not be greedy of worldly Honour; we ſhall not be deſirous of great Places; we ſhall not affect the Praiſe and Applauſe of Men; we ſhall be content to be evil ſpoken of and reviled, to be reproach'd and affronted; we ſhall not repine at Obloquy and Diſgrace; we ſhall not hunt after Honour and Promotion, and great Dignities, but we ſhall rather ſlight and diſregard them. But eſpecially we are bound to do this, when Honours and Preferments will bribe us to do thoſe Things which are ſinful and wicked. We muſt neither purchaſe nor retain worldly Honour with the neglect of our known Duty, much leſs with the acting contrary to it. The Pomp and Grandeur of the World, the Favour of great Ones, and the Hopes of being rais'd by them, muſt all vail to the indiſpenſible Concerns of our Conſciences and Chriſtianity: For *Self-denial* is that Chriſtian Grace, whereby a Man for God's Glory is content to loſe his own.

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[*] *Cauſin.* Holy Court. T. 2.

3. THE *ſinful Pleaſures* and *Delights of the Fleſh* are to be abſtain'd from by all the true Practiſers of *Self-denial.* An eminent Inſtance of this, was *Joſeph*, the modeſt, the chaſte *Joſeph*, who repuls'd the Sollicitations of his Miſtreſs. * *Luther* relates a notable Example of this in *Charles* the 5th, Emperor of *Germany*, who refus'd to know a beautiful Damſel, whom the *French* King (after a great Feaſt, wherewith he had entertain'd him in a Caſtle) caus'd to be conducted privately to his Bedchamber, and to be laid in his Bed: But learning of her who ſhe was, he ſent her home to her Parents unſtain'd, and afterwards commanded that Caſtle to be raſed and deſtroy'd. Yea, it may be fitting to *deny our ſelves* in *lawful Pleaſures* ſometimes: An Inſtance of which I may reckon the Practice of the Primitive Chriſtians, † who generally contented themſelves with a ſingle Marriage (though in this they went too far, that they condemn'd all ſecond Marriages as unlawful.) If ſome of them refrain'd from Matrimony a ſecond time out of a ſuperſtitious doting on Virginity (to which they had a mind to approach as near as they could) or out of an Opinion of meriting by it; I have nothing to ſay for it or them: But I have ſo much Charity as to believe they at firſt abſtain'd out of *Self-denial.* Yea, there was a *Sort* of this to be found even in the Women of old *Pagan Rome*; for we read, that thoſe Matrons among them who were content with once marrying were honoured with the || *Crown of Modeſty*, a Reward on purpoſe appointed for that piece of *Self-denial.* This is not to be queſtion'd, that Pleaſures, even lawful ones, are to be ſparingly us'd; and when you ſee juſt occaſion, you muſt not uſe them at all. When you find that by them, you grow cold and unconcern'd for the Joys and Pleaſures of a better Life, when they betray you to Eaſe and Delicacy, to Softneſs and Effeminacy, and render you forgetful of the great Employ you were ſent into this World about, which is to ſecure your eternal Welfare in another; when you are immoderately tranſported with the impulſe of theſe worldly Pleaſures; when you find your ſelves overſet with Delights and Blandiſhments of this Life, you need not doubt and diſpute with your ſelves, whether you ought to relinquiſh them. And the like I muſt ſay of

* *Coll q. Menſal.*

4thly, *Wealth* and *Riches:* when you begin to deſire and covet them inordinately; when your hearts are ſet upon them, when by plain *Experience* you perceive that they damp your Zeal for Religion, and when the Ways you make uſe of for acquiring them, are prejudicial unto, and inconſiſtent with the keeping of a good Conſcience, you have no more to do in this caſe, than to quit them with a reſolv'd Mind, to part with the unrighteous Mammon for durable and heavenly Riches. There are many Examples under this Head which might be produced, but I will refer them to another, where you may find them afterwards. At preſent, I will only mention that celebrated Man *Galeacius Caracciolus*, Marquis of *Vico*, who indeed is an Inſtance, not only of this, but of moſt of the other Particulars foregoing. This noble Perſon left his Country, his Friends and Relations, Honours and Pleaſures, and the greateſt part of his Eſtate, for the ſake of the Proteſtant Religion. His Conſcience would not allow him to live in the ſuperſtitious and idolatrous Practices of the *Roman* Church; wherefore he choſe to quit theſe and his worldly Incomes together, reckoning it his Intereſt no leſs than his Duty to abandon theſe rather than a good Conſcience. The like you muſt do if your Circumſtances be the ſame: You muſt part with this World's Goods, that you may not part with your Religion. And to prepare your ſelves for ſuch a Trial, you that are rich muſt be *daily* parting with your Wealth and worldly Revenues; I mean as to your willingneſs and

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† *Unius matrimonii vinculo libenter inhæremus: cupiditatem procreandi aut unam ſcimus aut nullam.* Minut. Fel.

|| *Corona pudicitiæ.* Valer. Max.

readineſs to leave them, if it ſhall ſeem good to the divine Providence to deprive you of them. Or, if your Riches increaſe, then you muſt be careful that the immoderate Deſire of worldly Gain and Profit do not likewiſe increaſe and grow upon you; but it muſt be your conſtant Endeavour to curb and ſuppreſs it, and effectually to throw off all undue and ſinful Love of the World. If this be not your daily care, it is certain you are unacquainted with the Grace of *Self-denial.*

5thly and laſtly, To mention ſeveral Things together, your *Self-denial* ought to diſcover itſelf, in renouncing *whatever* it is that adminiſters to *Pride,* or *Luſt,* or *Revenge.* No ſelf-denying Chriſtian is proud, he vaunts not of his *Wiſdom* and *Learning,* (though a very choice Attainment:) He values not himſelf upon his *Parentage* and *Extraction,* his Birth and Blood, (though this is of no mean Eſteem among Men;) neither doth he or ſhe boaſt of their *Beauty* and *Comelineſs,* (tho' this likewiſe is an excellent Gift of God:) much leſs, in the laſt Place, do they fondly prize themſelves for their rich and gorgeous *Apparel,* this being the meaneſt and loweſt of all the Things which I have named; and yet ſuch is the Folly of the World, and of this Age particularly, that both Men and Women affect this as the beſt and choiceſt of all. Tho' ſome are prevail'd with to deny themſelves as to other Things, yet they refuſe to do ſo as to this, and ſhew themſelves extravagant and exceſſive, wanton and effeminate in their Attire, and too plainly tell the World, that they make their Garb ſubſervient not only to their *Pride* but *Luſt.* Where then is their *Self-denial?*

I HAVE only this to add, that as there is included in this Grace a *renouncing of Revenge* (as was ſaid before,) ſo this is eminently diſcover'd in *Acts of Forgiveneſs.* He is a Self-denying Man indeed, who is ready to paſs by Offences, and actually doth forgive Injuries. There have been many Examples of this kind worth your taking notice of. Not only *Theodoſius,* but after him *Arcadius* and *Honorius* (Joint-Emperors) decreed thus concerning any Man's reviling or affronting them; namely, * that if it proceeded from Levity, it was to be deſpiſed; if from Madneſs to be pitied; if from Injuries, to be forgiven. Our *William* the Conqueror was very famous for his forgiving thoſe who had offended him, yea, admitting to Favour Perſons that had highly diſoblig'd him, and attempted the worſt Things againſt him. Our Chronicles will give you the Particulars, to them therefore I remit you.

BUT ſuffer me to relate one notable Inſtance of forgiving Enemies in another of our Kings, viz. *Richard* I. He in his Expedition againſt the *Turks,* in the War which was ſtiled the *Holy War,* was wounded with an Arrow which prov'd fatal to him; but when he found himſelf in an incurable Condition, and was apprehenſive that his Death was approaching, he ſent for the Man who had wounded him, who coming before the King, confidently own'd himſelf to be the Perſon that ſhot the Arrow, and withal proteſted that he rejoyc'd in the Action, and would do it again if it were to be done: The King was ſo far from ordering him to be ſeverely puniſh'd, freely forgave him, and beſides that wonderful Act of Clemency, he commanded that he ſhould be ſet at Liberty, and that none ſhould dare to do him any hurt, yea, he gave Orders that Sums of Money ſhould be given him as a Reward. It is one of the notableſt Paſſages of this kind that we ſhall meet with in Hiſtory, and it teaches us that to forget Injuries, and to pardon the greateſt Offences is a princely and royal Thing. If this part of *Self-denial* was more commonly practis'd, what a quiet World ſhould we have? You ſhould ſee Men take the Lie without *ſwearing* and *ſtabbing,* which now they will ſcarcely do. How ſoon would Men be won to a better Mind and Behaviour by this Chriſtian Carriage towards them! A brave Spirit ſlights Affronts, and thereby baffles thoſe that offend them. O that Men were inſpired with this excellent Perſwaſion, that it is an Argument of a great Soul to deſpiſe and forget Injuries, and that on the contrary † a revengeful Temper is the ſign of a poor mean Soul, and to ſtudy to return an Injury, is the pleaſure of a little and weak Spirit.

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* Leg. unic. C. Siquis Imperatori maledixerit.

† ——— Infirmi eſt animi exiguiq; Voluptas
Ultio. ——— *Juv.*

Thus you ſee your Task in all the ſeveral Parts and Diviſions of it. Every Chriſtian for Chriſt's Sake is to deny his *Perſonal Self*, (i. e. his Soul, the undue Exertments of the Underſtanding, Will and Affections: His Body, *i. e.* all its carnal and ſenſual Appetites, ſo far as they are hindrances to Virtue;) his *Relative Self*, his Father, Mother, Wife, Friends and Acquaintance, when they tempt him to Vice: His *Worldly Self* (if I may ſo call it) Houſes, Lands, Goods, Poſſeſſions, Honours, Pleaſures, and whatever we are wont to ſet a high value upon; about all theſe this Grace is commendably exercis'd. In ſhort, to *deny our ſelves* is to renounce our corrupt Natures, to oppoſe our falſe and perverſe Reaſonings, to contradict our depraved and irregular Wills, to correct our evil Inclinations, to check our inordinate Deſires, to conquer our impetuous Luſts and Paſſions, to vanquiſh our brutiſh and vile Affections, to baniſh all Self-love and Self-conceit, to beat down all Pride and Wantonneſs, to deny our ſelves in *ſome innocent* Pleaſures, and in *all ſinful ones*; to part with every Thing that is diſpleaſing to our Lord that bought us; in fine, wholly to ſubmit our ſelves to the Will and Pleaſure of God in all Things. Thus much of the *Nature* of the admirable Grace of *Self-denial*, which was the firſt Thing I undertook.

Secondly, It remains now that I convince you of the *Reaſonableneſs* of this Doctrine: which will appear from theſe enſuing Particulars. Firſt, there is Reſtraint and Hardſhip in all Religions. Secondly, No Man is entirely at his own Diſpoſal. Thirdly, to be reſtrain'd and confin'd is ſafeſt for us, and the contrary is dangerous and fatal. Fourthly, This is the greateſt Evidence of our Sincerity. Fifthly, Natural Reaſon and common Prudence dictate this to us. Sixthly, There are eminent Examples to encourage us to it. Laſtly, Heaven is the Reward of it.

1. It might be ſaid, that there is Reſtraint and Hardſhip in *all Religions* that ever were on Foot in the World, and ſo it ought not to be thought ſtrange in the *Chriſtian Religion.* Concerning the *Jews*, it is notoriouſly known, that their Lives commenc'd with an uneaſy and bloody Circumciſion: And by their *Moſaic* Law, they were tied up to an unſpeakable Strictneſs all their Lives long. They were forbid ſome Meats which were wholſome enough, and very palatable. And afterwards they ſtinted themſelves as to ſome *Drinks*, and would by no means taſte of the Wine of Idolatrous Nations. They were religiouſly confin'd as to their Garb and Apparel, and to their Converſe and Behaviour, their Rites and Ceremonies, which render'd their Condition very uneaſy, and almoſt inſupportable.

Should we look into the Religion of the *Gentiles*, that will be found to be clogg'd with very great Severities; and tho' one would think they ſhould have made it as pleaſant and enticing as poſſibly they could, yet he that takes a Survey of ſome of its Rites and Laws, ſhall diſcover inhumane and bloody Uſages, auſtere and cruel Practices preſcrib'd by them. And even among their wiſeſt and ſobereſt Philoſophers, Reſtraint and Self-denial were ever reputed laudable and virtuous. Some of them refus'd the richeſt Offers of Princes, and others of them voluntarily quitted their Eſtates and Revenues, and embrac'd Poverty, and reckon'd their greateſt Wealth to be the Contempt of it (of which I ſhall give you ſome Inſtances afterwards.) At this Day the People of *Africa*, on the Coaſts of *Guinea*, do all of them *abſtain* from one thing or other, in honour of their *Fetiches*, their little portable gods.

Need I take notice of the deluded Sect of *Mahomet*, to whom is granted a ſhameful Indulgence in moſt things, yet their Prophet would not give them their Freedom as to all Things, but preremptorily denied them the Pleaſure of the *Grapes* and of *Swines Fleſh.* I will not inſiſt here on the ſuperſtitious Auſterities and unreaſonable Reſtraints, which another Sort of Men enjoyn in their Church, and which are ſo readily ſubmitted to by great numbers among them. My Deſign at preſent is only to repreſent this to you, that Reſtriction is no new and ſtrange thing, and that it hath been generally allow'd and approv'd of by ſuch as have fram'd Models of Religion. And upon this very account it is unfair and irrational to diſlike it in the *Chriſtian* Oeconomy, eſpecially when the Things that we are oblig'd to renounce by the Laws of Chriſt, would prove unſpeakably dangerous and deſtructive to us if they were not relinquiſh'd.

2. I offer this to your Conſideration, That there is not any Man *ſui juris*, at his own Diſpoſal. If we acknowledge God for our Creator, we have upon that very ſcore all the reaſon in the World to own his Right of Commanding us. If we receiv'd our Being from him, it is but juſt that all our Actions ſhould be govern'd by him. As he *made* us, he hath a Right of giving Laws to us his Creatures, and of diſpoſing us as he pleaſeth. We are born Subjects of the divine Kingdom, as * *Seneca* excellently ſpeaks; God is our King and Governor, and it is our Freedom to obey him. On this Account it is reaſonable, that we ſhould not follow our own Fancies and Humours, and do what we will. This alone is a ſufficient Ground for our abſolute and entire denying of our ſelves. But if we conſider likewiſe that *we are bought with a Price*, we may infer thence that *we are not our own*, but are for ever at the Pleaſure of him that ranſom'd us: And having receiv'd Laws and Directions from him, we are engag'd to obſerve them with all Fidelity, and with the greateſt Reverence and Submiſſion cloſe with them. We are to give up our ſelves to God, to offer up our Bodies, Souls and Spirits, and all we have to him. † Our whole *Religion* is a ſacred *Tye*, we are bound to devote our ſelves to God's Will, and we cannot diſengage our ſelves. But this is more particularly eſſential to the *Chriſtian* Religion, that we ſacrifice all our Actions and our whole Lives to God's Service, that we contentedly live under the Government, and be ſwayed by the Diſcipline of our Lord Jeſus, and follow him whitherſoever he pleaſeth to lead us.

A *Chriſtian* muſt not do what he would, that is, what his ſinful Inclinations prompt him to. He muſt be confin'd within Bounds; he is a Perſon pre-engag'd, and muſt not, cannot be at the beck of every fooliſh Luſt. He hath abjur'd the World by his Baptiſmal Vow; being waſh'd in the ſacred Font, how can he defile himſelf? How can he act in Oppoſition to thoſe ſolemn Promiſes and Engagements which he lies under? He muſt not complain of the Strictneſs of the Goſpel Rules; he muſt not wiſh for Eaſe and Relaxation, but he muſt perſwade himſelf that *Service* and *Liberty*, *Laws* and *Freedom* are not inconſiſtent; that to ſin freely and uncontroulably is againſt the true Liberty of a Chriſtian; and that to ſerve God is perfect Freedom; and that we ought to reckon it even our *Happineſs*, that we have a Line drawn about us; that our Bounds are ſet us; that we are held in by the Severity of the Chriſtian Laws. Which brings me to a

Third CONSIDERATION, which will evince both the Neceſſity and Equity of this Chriſtian Duty. To be kept in and confin'd, to be limited and curb'd by holy and juſt Laws, to be commanded to walk by Rules, and not to be ſuffer'd to be licentious, and to do what we pleaſe; this is the moſt *ſafe*, and therefore the moſt happy Condition that can be imagin'd. It is undoubtedly the greateſt Kindneſs that God could confer upon us, to fence us in with Laws, and to deny us many Things which we eagerly deſire: For he ſees, that what we ſo exorbitantly crave would be our Ruin. How dangerous and miſchievous to the World would an unreſtrain'd Liberty prove? Whatever we think of it now, I perſwade my ſelf, that afterwards we would cry out and complain, if our Reſtraints were taken off, and if we were forc'd by ſevere Penalties to the Practice of all Intemperance and Looſeneſs. Would you know what was the true Origin of *Solomon*'s Miſcarriages? Where can you *expect to* learn it but in his penitential Book, his ſolemn Retractations, where he preſents himſelf a publick Penitentiary? Peruſe then the 2d *Eccleſ.* 10. where you'll find him thus ſpeaking, *Whatſoever mine Eyes deſired I kept not from them, I withheld not my Heart from any Joy.* This was the fatal Rock he ſplit upon. He reſolv'd to *deny himſelf nothing*, and then you may gueſs what will follow. What can be expected now, but that he ſhould ſally out to every thing that is vain and wicked? Accordingly you hear of the diſmal Conſequences of his licentious Range; you read the Story of his unbounded and unreſtrain'd Appetite; of his wild and unſatiable Luſt. Then *Solomon*, who built the Temple, founded a Seraglio, and that at *Jeruſalem* look'd too like the Platform of what is now at *Conſtantinople*. This alſo was the *Pro-*

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* *In regno nati ſumus, Deo parere libertas eſt.* De vit. Beat. c. 14.

† *Religio, à religando.* Lactant.

digal's Ruin: He was impatiently deſirous of being at his own diſpoſal: He would not be reſtrain'd by his *Father's* Government; he would be free and live at large; he would have his Portion ſet out; he would go abroad and ſee the World, and take his Swing, and do what he pleas'd, and be no longer under the old Man's Eye. This prov'd the Occaſion of his ſhameful Diſorders, and his wild way of living, and at length of the miſerable Condition he was reduced to.

THIS is truly Ἀνομία, as Sin is call'd, in 1 *John* iii. 4. which, tho' we tranſlate *the Tranſgreſſion of the Law*, yet it may more properly be render'd *Lawleſneſs*, or caſting off all Laws and Reſtraints. And this is the true Notion of a *Son of Belial*, which is an Expreſſion often made uſe of in the Old Taſtament; and it will not be amiſs here to give you the right Senſe of it. For though ſome have thought, that that Word *Belial* ſignifies as much as a * *naughty Man*, one of no Account, a Perſon that is unſerviceable and uſeleſs in the World; yet the generality of learned Men aſſign another Meaning, telling us, that *Belial* is as much as † *one without a Yoke*. And this doth fitly expreſs to us the Nature of exorbitant Sinners; they will by no means ſuffer a Yoke on their Necks; they can't endure Reſtraint and Diſcipline; they run into all manner of Evil, and commit it with greedineſs, and will not be curb'd and check'd. Therefore this Word is applied in Scripture to the moſt wicked and profligate Sinners. *Sons of Belial* are ſuch harden'd Wretches, as will venture on any villanous Enterprize: They care not what they do, ſo they can gratify their own depraved Inclinations. And hence proceeds their Ruin: When they let their Deſires out too far, they run mad, and undo themſelves. According to the double Denotation of the ‖ *Hebrew* Word; their extravagant Wills betray them to wild and diſorder'd Actions; and ſuch as cannot reaſonably be thought to proceed from any Perſons, but ſuch as are out of their Wits. What ſober Man then will entertain this extravagant Deſire, this lawleſs Appetite? Yea, what ſober and underſtanding Perſon will not check and reſtrain it with all his might? For as 'tis a true Aphoriſm of *Hippocrates*, ∴ the more you nouriſh morbid Bodies, the more hurt you do them, ſo the more you faſten this inordinate Deſire in your Souls, the more you harm and miſchief your ſelves. You think, it may be, to *ſtint* and *ſatisfy* your Deſires by giving them what they crave: But that is the way rather to *increaſe* them. One Pleaſure doth but make way for another.

AND beſides, the Pleaſures which ſome luxurious Perſons entertain themſelves with *now*, will not be Pleaſures *afterwards*. The preſent Delights will in Time grow out of date, and ſome others muſt be ſought for. Thus [a] *Tully* tells us that *Xerxes* was ſo given to Luxury, that by publick Edict he offer'd a Reward to any Man that ſhould find out a *new kind* of Pleaſure. An extravagant Deſire is never long ſatisfied: This inſatiable Tyrant (as a [b] profound Platonick Philoſopher ſpeaks) deſpiſes the Things that are preſent, and impatiently deſires thoſe that are abſent, and which we have not yet enjoyed. And in the ſame Place he hath theſe admirable Words, [c] When Man's Mind hath once taſted Pleaſures beyond what neceſſity requires, it ſoon hath enough of the former ones, and dotes upon new ones; and he gives the reaſon of it thus: [d] There is (ſaith he) a perpetual Thirſt in ſuch a Man, and therefore all the Pleaſures in the World can't allay and quench it. And in another place he hath this excellent Paſſage, [e] "One Pleaſure draws on another, one is link'd to the other, ſo that "when once they begin to flow, they never ceaſe, they can never be ſtopp'd. "There is but one way to ſave all, and that is to damm up the Fountains,

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* *Homo nequam, nullius frugis*: For they derive *Belijagnal* or (the middle Letter being ſtruck ou) *Belial* from *Beli* non, & *Jagnal* profuit *fructum tulit*.

† For they derive *Belial* from *Beli non* or *abſque*, & *Gnol jugum*: So that *Belial* is *ſine jugo*.

‖ *Jaal, voluit, deſiperavit: & inſanivit.*

∴ Τὰ μὴ καθαρὰ τῶν σωμάτων ὁκόσον ἂν θρέψῃς, μᾶλλον βλάψεις.

[a] Tuſc. Quæſt. l. 5.

[b] Ἀκόρεστος ὁ τύραννος οὗτος καὶ τῶν παρόντων ὑπεροπτικὸς, καὶ τῶν μὴ παρόντων ὀρεκτικός. Maxi Tyr. Diſſert. 34.

[c] Ἐπειδὰν ἅπαξ ψυχὴ γεύσηται ἡδονῶν ὑπὲρ τὴν αὐτῆς χρείαν, κόρος αὐτῇ τῶν προτέρων ἔχει, καὶ ἑτέρων ἐρᾷ.

[d] Δίψα διηνεκὴς ἀνδρὸς φιληδόνου.

[e] Ἄλλη ἄλλην παρακαλεῖ ἡδονὴν, καὶ ἔστι ξυμφυὲς τὸ χρῆμα, καὶ ἄπαυστον καὶ ἀέναον, ἐπειδὰν ἄρξηται ζεῖν, καὶ μία μηχανὴ πρὸς σωτηρίαν, στῆσαι τὰς πηγὰς καὶ ἀποφράξαι τῶν ἡδονῶν τὴν φύσιν. Diſſertat. 7.

" the very firſt Source and Spring of Pleaſures, *viz.* the inward deſire and long-" ing after them." And this excellent Moraliſt ingeniouſly illuſtrates it after this manner, [f] ' When a Man is in a Fever, ſaith he, the way to be cured is to ab-" ſtain from thoſe Things which the Phyſician hath forbid him, though he doth " moſt of all deſire them; for thoſe Things will but add to his Diſeaſe, and feed " his Diſtemper; and it is certain he will the ſooner recover his Health, if he " curbs his Deſire and Appetite." But alas! Nothing is more frequent than what he hath obſerv'd, *viz.* * ' That Men had rather be ſick, and have their " Pleaſure, than be well with ſome little Labour, and denying of themſelves " for the preſent." But what can prove more hurtful and pernicious than this? Yea, it is certain that the Man who thus pleaſes himſelf, will in a ſhort Time be diſpleaſed with what he has done, and cry out as that Commander did, who at the drinking his Water and quenching his Thirſt, after he had given up himſelf and his Army into the Enemies Hands, utter'd ſuch Words as theſe, † How great a Felicity have I loſt for a ſhort Pleaſure?

[f] Diſſert. 15.

You ſee then what neceſſity there is of *Self-denial* in this caſe. If you conſult your own Welfare, you are obliged to put this part of Mortification in practice; if you have not a mind to be ruined and deſtroyed, you muſt ſpeedily take care to tie the Knot hard upon your looſe Deſires; not to ſatisfy every eager Inclination, nor to indulge your ſelves in the Fruition of every enticing Object, but ſo to bridle and ſubdue your own Wills that you may be obedient unto God's. To conclude this Particular, the Folly of Men can't exert itſelf in a higher Inſtance than this, that they are impatiently deſirous of being *lawleſs*, and of being left without Controul; this is that which they ſo paſſionately long for, that they may do what is good in their own Eyes, that they may act whatever their depraved Minds prompt them to. Satan poſſeſſes them with that ſo taking Notion, of being advanced to ſuch a ſtate wherein they may do what they pleaſe, and be free from the Commands of a *Superior*, tho' he be ſuch a one as beſt knows what is good for them, and what is moſt ſuitable to their Nature, and may moſt effectually further their Bliſs. This muſt be voted for extream *Folly*, as moſt certainly it is the greateſt *Wiſdom* (no leſs than the moſt deſirable Freedom) to reſign our ſelves to God, and to deny our ſelves.

4. STILL by way of *Reaſon*, conſider, that to deny our ſelves is the faireſt and moſt convincing Evidence of the *Sincerity* of our Hearts. By this we give an undeniable Experiment of the free and plenary Conſent of our Wills. We make it appear that our Religion is of *Choice*, that we are not conſtrain'd to what we do in it; we ſhew the World that *Difficulty* (which is always requiſite to *Virtue* and Goodneſs) cannot diſhearten and diſmay us; yea, that we love the very Hardſhips which attend ſo excellent Enterprizes. We give a Demonſtration of the uprightneſs of our Souls, by refraining from whatever is forbidden us by the divine Laws. I doubt not but that God made thoſe Laws too, that he might make a Trial of our hearty Obedience by our parting with ſomething for Him. And this even in the ſtate of Man's Innocency, was his way of Probation. Abſtinence or Self-denial was the Primitive Law of the *Earthly Paradice*, and by it alone it is that we ſhall gain the Poſſeſſion of the heavenly one. Ever ſince, in all Ages of the World the All-wiſe God hath tried the Hearts of Men, by propounding ſome difficult Task to them, and by commanding Duties which by Nature they are moſt averſe to. *Sell all that thou haſt, and give it to the Poor*, ſaid our bleſſed Lord to the Man who he diſcerned to be covetous, *Mark* x. 31. By this one Propoſal the Man was tried what he was: *He went away ſorrowful*, he was unwilling to leave his Goods to follow Chriſt. But *Abraham* was an Inſtance of the contrary Temper; very hard Things were commanded him, and he obey'd them without diſputing; whence there was a full Trial made of his Sincerity, and that he lov'd and feared God in the Truth of his Heart.

5. NATURAL Reaſon, common Prudence, and every Days Practice commend unto us this Divine Grace of *Self-denial*. Wiſe Men in a Tempeſt are perſwaded to throw their richeſt Lading over-board, and commit it to the de-

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* Πόνους αἱροῦνται ἡδόμενοι νοσεῖν μᾶλλον ἢ πονοῦντες ὑγιασθῆναι.

† Ὡς βραχείας ἡδονῆς ἕνεκα μεγάλην εὐδαιμονίαν ἀπεβαλόμην. Plutarch.

vouring Element, that is, they are willing to part with their Goods to ſave their Lives. * It is reckon'd by us as Wiſdom, to deprive our ſelves of ſome Good and Eaſe for a while; to make ſure of a greater and more laſting one afterwards. We expoſe our ſelves to Danger that we may be ſafe. To recover Health we ſubmit to unpleaſant Potions; tho' the Phyſick proves as hateful as the Diſeaſe, yet we are reconciled to it, by conſidering that it will be profitable to our Bodies afterwards; by the Loſs of a *Limb* we are content to ſecure the whole. Prudence and Reaſon juſtify all this, and ſhall they not much more reconcile us to the painful Remedies which our great and good Phyſician preſcribes? Shall we not with willing Minds *mortify* our earthly Members, and *cut off* our Right Hands, as Chirurgeons proceed to *Amputation* when a Limb is *dead?* Shall we not quit any Thing, tho' never ſo dear to us, rather than hazard the eternal Welfare of our Souls? Peremptory is that Preſcription of our Saviour, *Mark* ix. 49. *Every one ſhall be ſalted with Fire*, that is, every Diſciple of mine muſt deny his Luſts, and as it were with Fire burn up all evil Affections in him; and that *Exuſtion* is like *Salt*, to keep and preſerve the whole. So he ſhall be an acceptable *Offering* unto God; for (as it follows in the next Words) *Every Sacrifice ſhall be ſalted with Salt*; which refers to *Lev.* ii. 13. where it is commanded that all Sacrifices ſhall be offered with Salt; this then I take to be the meaning of thoſe Words, *every one ſhall be ſalted with Fire*, that is, every Chriſtian ſhall be *kept* and *preſerved* to the heavenly Kingdom by outward and inward Tribulation. This Fiery Furnace purges them, and fits them for Heaven. *This Fire ſhall try every Man's Work*, and this *Fire* ſhall be inſtead of *Salt* to preſerve them, for they would periſh without this; ſo I interpret this myſtical Text. The harſheſt Methods muſt be made uſe of, and your ſpiritual Phyſician ſees it neceſſary to do ſo. Cuttings and Cauſticks are to be undergone; and if by theſe the Soul can be kept from periſhing Everlaſtingly, we may pronounce them moſt bleſſed Expedients, and with the devout *Father* cry out, Here burn me, here cut me, be as ſevere with me as thou wilt in this World, ſo thou wilt be pleaſed to ſpare me in another.

6. LET me ſet before you ſome *great and eminent Examples* to juſtify the *Reaſonableneſs* of this Duty of *Self-denial*. Firſt, Let me propound to you the Example of *Chriſt Jeſus* our Bleſſed Lord and Maſter. *He pleaſed not himſelf*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* xv. 3. That he might pleaſe his Father, and that he might gratify us, he pleaſed not himſelf: Here is the grand Pattern of *Self-denial*. Endeavour to imitate this, and you will obtain to a great height of Perfection. I might ſhew you how Chriſt denied himſelf as to all thoſe ſeveral Particular Inſtances, and Acts of Self-denial, which I before mention'd. He would not ſuffer his Kindred and Relations to call him away from his great Buſineſs and Work which his heavenly Father ſent him to do; but he ſmartly utter'd theſe Words, *Who is my Mother, and who are my Brethren? Whoſoever ſhall do the Will of my Father which is in Heaven, the ſame is my Brother, and Siſter and Mother.* Again, How generous did he deſpiſe the *Pleaſures* of this Life, counting it his Meat and Drink (as he expreſſes it) his chief Delight and Satisfaction, to do the Will of his Father. His *Self*-denial was as eminently ſeen in deſpiſing of *Wealth* and *Riches*, chuſing to live a poor and mean Life, whilſt others purchaſed great Eſtates, and hoarded up vaſt Treaſures. Was he not remarkable alſo in his refuſing of *Honours* and *Dignities*, and great Titles, running away from the People, and hiding himſelf when they had a Deſign to make him King? He is a Pattern of *forbearing* and *forgiving*, according to that of the Apoſtle, who exhorts the *Coloſſians* to *forbear one another, and to forgive one another, if any Man had a quarrel againſt any, even as Chriſt forgave them*, Col. iii. 13. *His* Example is propounded here for their Imitation; there never was the like Pattern of this *Forgiving*.

AND then, what a ſignal Demonſtration of *Self-denial* was his Paſſion and Death? He might have choſen whether he would have undergone thoſe unſpeakable Sufferings, or not; and he knew very well how grievous and painful they would be. But I pray mark his Words and his Behaviour, *Mark* viii. 32, 33. where you read, that when he had ſpoken of his Sufferings, *Peter took him and began to rebuke him*; he diſſwaded him from undergoing ſuch dreadful things. But Chriſt rebuked *Peter*, ſaying, *Get thee behind me, Satan*, (the very Language which at another time he us'd to the Devil, *Luke* iv. 8.) *for thou ſavoureſt not the things that are of God, but the things that are of Man.* When thou tempteſt me to conſult my Eaſe, and to wave my Sufferings, thou acteſt the part of *Satan*, an *Adverſary* (as that Word ſignifies) thou ſheweſt thy ſelf an *Enemy* to God and me; thou perſwadeſt me to that which I am perfectly averſe to; for I have propos'd to redeem loſt Man, and *nothing* ſhall hinder me from effecting it. *I am the good Shepherd, and will lay down my Life for my Sheep*; I will ſpend my Blood for the Redemption of my Choſen. Shall not this wonderful Condeſcenſion and Self-denial of our Lord excite us to imitate him, and in our Capacity to do ſomething that may be ſaid to anſwer to it? Shall we not abandon our Sins to entertain our Saviour? I beſeech you think of this, that Chriſt denied himſelf for us: We ought therefore to deny our ſelves for him. What can be more perſwaſive and powerful than this? To a Chriſtian there needs no other Argument than this.

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* Negotiatio eſt aliquid amittere, ut majora lucreris. *Tertul. ad Martyros.*

But beſides this, there are *other Examples*, viz. of Patriarchs, Prophets, Apoſtles, and divers holy Men, who have been noted for their *Self-denial*. *Abraham* was an eminent Pattern of it, in that he immediately quitted his own Country, and his Kindred, and his Father's Houſe, and became a Pilgrim in a ſtrange Land. And afterwards he ſhew'd his Readineſs to ſacrifice his only Son, his beloved Son *Iſaac*. When he had receiv'd a Command from God to do it, *he roſe up early in the Morning* (as you read, *Gen.* xxii. 3.) he haſten'd out of the Houſe betimes, that he might not ſtay to liſten to any Suggeſtions which might retard him in his intended Purpoſe. In this we muſt follow the Steps of this great Maſter of *Self-denial*; we muſt not conſult with Fleſh and Blood when God's Command calls for our abſolute Obedience. *Job* and *David* I mention'd before as Examples of *Self-denial*, and I need not repeat the particular Acts of it. Only I will remind you of another notable Act of this Grace in that holy King *David*. You may read it in 1 *Chron.* xi. 18. when ſome bold Warriors and Captains had broke thro' the Army of the *Philiſtines*, and had fetch'd him Water to quench his Thirſt, he generouſly refus'd to drink of it, and aſſwage his Thirſt with it, becauſe it had been procur'd with the apparent hazard of theſe brave Men's Lives; and inſtead of drinking it, he pour'd it out before the Lord. A very remarkable Inſtance certainly of *Self-denial*.

The New Teſtament likewiſe affords us Examples of the ſame. I will mention only the *Apoſtles* and *Diſciples* of our Lord and Saviour, who (as the Hiſtory of the Goſpel relates) freely quitted their worldly Concerns, left their ſecular Profit, and forſook all to follow Chriſt. No Threats nor Promiſes could keep them from admitting themſelves under his Diſcipline. They valued not their Friends and Relations; they deſpiſed all earthly Conveniences and Accommodations; they underwent all Kinds of Sufferings, that they might preach the Goſpel, and maintain the Cauſe of Chriſt, and be faithful to him that had call'd them.

But beſides the Examples which the *Scripture* afford us, there are ſeveral Examples of *Self-denial* among the Primitive Chriſtians, which Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory takes notice of, and hath tranſmitted to Poſterity; but ſome of theſe I have interſperſed (as you may remember) in the preceding part of my Diſcourſe, and therefore omit them here.

Let me now provoke you to a godly Emulation by ſome Inſtances even of *Heathen* Men. If ſome *Pagans* could arrive to ſome Meaſure of *Self-denial* by their natural Light and Reaſon, ſurely you, who profeſs higher Principles, will be aſham'd to come ſhort of them. *Plato* tells us of his Maſter *Socrates*, that when his Friends and Relatives, and thoſe who bore a great Affection to him, came to him in Priſon, and wiſh'd him by all means to ſubmit to the Senate of *Athens*, and thereby to ſave his Life; his Anſwer was, * "O my *Athenians*, I "muſt needs profeſs to you, that I greatly reſpect and love you; but I tell you

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* Ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς, Ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, ἀσπάζομαι μὲν ϗ φιλῶ πείσομαι δὲ τῷ θεῷ μᾶλλον ἢ ὑμῖν.

" plainly, I am reſolv'd to obey God rather than you. Moſt divinely ſpoken, and like a true Denier of himſelf. *Plutarch* tells us, that the ſame Perſon was eminent for the Exerciſe of this Virtue through the whole Courſe of his Life. He practis'd great Abſtinence, and was a Perſon of marvellous Moderation. He neither went himſelf, nor would permit others to go to thoſe Sights, or to frequent thoſe Objects and Entertainments which were vain and wanton; and he adviſed all Perſons to take care to avoid thoſe Meats and Drinks which tempt them to eat and drink, when they are neither hungry nor thirſty. That was a gallant Action which is recorded of *Cato* the younger, a notable *Roman* Captain, who marching through the hot Sands of *Lybia* grew extreme thirſty; and when one of his Soldiers brought him ſome Water in his Helmet, which he had got with great difficulty and pains, he pour'd it out upon the Ground, as a Teſtimony that he could bear Thirſt as well as his Soldiers. This was another *David* as to this Behaviour of his.

The Writings of ‖ *Ælian* ∵ and *Valerius Maximus*, mention the Examples of *Anaxagoras*, *Xenophon*, *Dio*, *Antigonus* and ſeveral others, who bore the Death of their Children with couragious Minds, and were nothing troubled at the Tidings that were brought of it. Hiſtory tells us of *Antiſthenes*, *Crates*, *Diogenes*, who were famous for deſpiſing Money and Riches. *Xenocrates* and *Polemon*, two *Athenian* Philoſophers, were noted Inſtances of Chaſtity: The former could not be tainted by all the Temptations of *Phryne*, the celebrated *Courtezan* at *Athens*: The latter by his auſtere Life ſcared away all lewd Women, ſo that they were afraid to appear in his ſight. *Scipio Africanus*, a *Roman* General, after he had taken *Carthage*, had a beautiful Captive preſented to him, but he refus'd to diſhonour her or debaſe himſelf by any unchaſte Action. *Xenophon* relates of *Cyrus* the King of *Perſia*, that he would not ſo much as ſee the fair *Panthea*, the Wife of King *Abradaras*, who was taken in Battel, and reſerv'd on purpoſe for him by one of his Captains. And when one told *Cyrus*, that her Beauty was worth the beholding, he anſwer'd, that therefore it was much more neceſſary to abſtain from ſeeing it. And truly this *Cyrus* is propounded by *Xenophon* as one of the greateſt Inſtances of Self-denial and Moderation in all Particulars; many of which you'll find diſtinctly ſet down by that excellent Hiſtorian; who alſo acquaints us that his Soldiers and Followers were train'd up to Severity and Abſtinence, and the exacteſt Self-denial. I might tell you what † *Plutarch* reports of *Alexander* the Great, namely, that he would not ſuffer the Wife of King *Darius* to come into his Preſence, leſt he ſhould thereby receive Impreſſions which might be dangerous to him. And indeed I could prove it to you from ſeveral *Heathen* Writers, that they were perſwaded of the Truth of what our Saviour ſaid, that he who *looketh on a Woman to luſt after her is guilty of Adultery*. One of the wantoneſt Poets was ſenſible of this, who confeſs'd, that * *Looks* are criminal, and that there is a kind of an *Adultery* of the *Eye*.

‖ Var. Hiſt. l. 3.
∵ Lib. 5. c. 10.

There are other Inſtances which might be produced of a certain ſort of *Self-denial* even among thoſe who were of mere moral Principles. Many notable and worthy Examples there are among them of ſlighting Wealth, Honours and Preferments, which I ſhall have occaſion to mention in † another place. Yea, particular Examples might be aſſign'd of every one of the Acts of *Self-denial* above named. I will conclude with one ſort only, namely, forgiving of Injuries. How ready *Pythagoras*'s Scholars were to do this, appears from that excellent Cuſtom which was duly obſerv'd by them, which was this; that if peradventure in diſputing, or otherwiſe, they were enter'd into ſome Choler, before the Sun went down, they met, where they loving embrac'd, and ſhook Hands with one another. This Cuſtom they inviolably kept; and who knows but that the Apoſtle alludes to it, when he ſaith, *Let not the Sun go down on your Wrath?* As if he had ſaid, Let the Practice of *Pagans* force a Bluſh from angry *Chriſtians*, who will not be reconcil'd. We are told, that *Pericles*, the great *Grecian* Orator, after he had been a whole Day together abus'd by the Language of a contemptible Varlet, bid his Servant at Night light him home to his Lodging. A *Lacedemonian* having put out *Lycurgus*'s Eye by chance; this generous Man was ſo far from animadverting upon him, that he took him into his Houſe, and kept him in the Quality of a Servant. *Phocion*, the famous *Athenian*, who was unjuſtly ſentenc'd to Death by his Fellow Citizens, ſtreightly charg'd and commanded his Son not to be angry with the *Athenians*, when he call'd to mind at any time how they ſerv'd his Father. How ingenious was the Meekneſs of ſome of them in making ſome pretty put-off when they found themſelves affronted and abus'd? Thus when *Lentulus* ſpit in *Cato*'s Face as he was pleading at the Bar; this latter only wiped his Face, and ſaid, *Well*, Lentulus, *I'll henceforth affirm, that they are much deceiv'd who ſay you have no Mouth.* So *Socrates* meeting with a Box on the Ear one time in the Market-place, was heard only to ſay, *This is the Grief of it, that a Man knows not when to come out without Helmet on.* But enough at preſent of theſe *Heathen Examples*, which are but a Shadow of that Self-denial which the *Goſpel* requires, and which *Chriſtians* ought to practiſe. However, I thought it not unfit to mention theſe, that I might ſhame Chriſtians into the Practice of this Duty. Who amongſt us imitates theſe brave Men? Where ſhall we find ſuch Examples of *Self-denial* among the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity? Here you ſee how far the natural Reaſon and Light of the *Gentiles* directed them. I have ſet this before you, that you may be ſtirr'd up to act greater and nobler Things, having the redundant Light of the Goſpel to direct and conduct you. You muſt do what they did, and you muſt do more, and what you do muſt be perform'd on better Principles and to better Ends, namely, out of Love to God, and hearty Affection to Goodneſs and Virtue; out of Reverence to the Divine Majeſty, and the Obedience we owe to our great Maſter and Redeemer, and for the Glory and Honour of his Name in the World, otherwiſe your *Self-denial* will be not that which is acceptable to God.

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† Περὶ πολυπραγμοσύνης.

* *Qui videt, is peccat: qui non te viderit ergo*
Non cupiet: facti crimina Lumen habet. Tibul. l. 2. Eleg. 12.

† Serm. of *Contentment*.

7thly and laſtly, If we would ſeriouſly conſider that *Heaven* ſhall be the Reward of Self-denial, this would make the Performance of this Duty eaſy. Remember this, that you part with ſome worldly and earthly Advantages, that you may gain eternal Happineſs in another Life; yea, this Happineſs cannot be purchas'd unleſs you quit thoſe worldly Advantages which are accompanied with Sin and Vice. The *Jews* in a Proverbial way ſay, *No Man deſerves two Tables*; their meaning is, no Man ſhall have his Portion in this World, and in that to come. He muſt not abound here with earthly Delights altogether, and afterwards be happy in Heaven. The Pleaſures of Sin will debar us of the Pleaſures that are at God's right Hand. Be contented then to wade thro' Difficulties and Hardſhips; deny your ſelves and mortify your Luſts, remembring that all Difficulties ſhall be *over-balanced* with *that moſt exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.* Hear what a moral Philoſopher ſaith, † We ought to avoid many Pleaſures, and undergo many Difficulties, that we may gain a Poſſeſſion, which will be equivalent to all Pleaſures, and which will make amends for all Difficulties. If this Man could diſcourſe after this rate, how ought *Chriſtians* to chear and ſolace themſelves? A never-failing Crown of Glory is laid up for them, eternal Manſions are allotted them; and ſhall not this encourage them to undergo the greateſt Hazards with all chearfulneſs and forwardneſs? Let not the Dangers you meet with diſcourage you, but rather excite your Diligence and Induſtry, for thoſe future Glories above will recompence you ſufficiently for your preſent Sufferings here. Thus you ſee how *reaſonable* and *equitable* it is to *deny your ſelves.* So much for the Second general Head of my Diſcouſe.

Now, in the third and laſt Place, I will offer thoſe *Means* and *Helps* whereby we may attain to this Grace and Duty which I have been treating of. If then thou wouldeſt effectually practiſe this evangelical Duty of *Self-denial* (which is ſo excellent and yet ſo difficult) thou mayſt be aſſiſted by ſuch proper Helps as theſe;

1. By daily flying unto God for Succour, by praying to be reſcued and delivered from thy ſelf, according to that good *Father's* devout Litany, *O Lord de-*

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† Πολλὰς δεῖ ἡδονὰς παραδραμεῖν, ϗ πολλοῖς πόνοις ἀντιβλῆψαι, ἵνα κτησώμεθα κτῆμα ἡδοναῖς πάσαις ἰσοστάσιον, ϗ πόνοις πᾶσιν ἀντίῤῥοπον.

liver me from my ſelf; ſhield me from my own depraved Nature; defend me from my own wild Deſires and Affections; teach me to moderate my Paſſions, to curb all my unruly Appetites and Inclinations; amend and correct the Temper of my Soul; bend my ſtubborn Will, that it may be entirely conformed unto thine. Thus make your ardent Addreſſes to Heaven in the firſt place, for you can do nothing in this great Affair till you are aſſiſted from above.

2. Prayer muſt be back'd with *Endeavours*, and your Endeavours muſt begin *within*. You muſt ſtrike at the Root, the original Cauſe of all the Diſorders in your Life, *viz.* your inward Luſts and Deſires. You muſt labour to ſuppreſs and ſtifle theſe, otherwiſe the outward Objects will work upon your Thoughts, tho' you deny Commerce between them and your bodily Senſes. *Democritus*, who 'tis ſaid put out his Eyes as a Remedy againſt Luſt, did perhaps doubly enhanſe their Invieglement by Imagination. Your firſt Buſineſs therefore is to correct it *within*, to regulate your Deſires and Inclinations, and then you may ſafely look abroad, and not fear any actual or outward exorbitances in your Lives; yea, then you may aſſure your ſelves, that your whole Spirit, Soul and Body, ſhall be ſanctified, and that you ſhall be able to exerciſe a perfect Dominion over all your Luſts. Begin with your Hearts, keep them with all Diligence, otherwiſe all your *Attempts* and *Endeavours without* are in vain.

3. CONSIDER ſeriouſly the high Calling whereunto God hath called you, and wherein you ought ſo to behave your ſelves, that you do nothing which may diſgrace and diſhonour your Profeſſion; which cannot be effected by any other means than by croſſing the tendencies of your own depraved Wills, and by devoting your ſelves wholly to God's, and by living in an exact Compliance with the Commands of your great Maſter and Redeemer.

4. LET us weigh our Condition well, and often urge it upon our Thoughts, that we are but *Strangers* and *Pilgrims*, and being upon our *Journey*, it would be unreaſonable to expect that we ſhould have every Thing *according to our Mind.* The preſent State we are in will not bear it; wherefore, if you underſtand your true Intereſt and Concern in this Juncture, you will accommodate your Minds to the Circumſtances you are in; that is, you will deny your ſelves, and abſtain from fleſhly Luſts which war againſt the Spirit, and ſtrive to get the Conqueſt over them. The pondering of your preſent Condition will wonderfully contribute towards this.

5. IT is requiſite that you entertain right Notions concerning the Things of this World. Men generally have falſe and undue Conceptions concerning theſe, and thence proceeds their own high Eſteem of them, and Paſſion for them. It was an excellent Obſervation of one of the Ancients, [*] Thoſe Deſires which are natural and innocent are ſtinted, but thoſe that ariſe from falſe Apprehenſions and Opinions of Things are boundleſs. For, ſaith he, there is no determining and limiting that which is falſe: Truth is circumſcribed, but Error acknowledges no Bounds. It is neceſſary therefore, in order to the ſtinting and limiting your Deſires, that you underſtand aright the nature of the Things of this World. Let not reaſonable Minds over-rate Things of ſo mean a Value: Let not their deluded Hopes and Fancies betray them to the proſecuting theſe Things with an exceſſive Care and Concern, which are not the main and important Matters that they are to buſy themſelves about. It was one of *Epictetus*'s Rules, and it will fit us Chriſtians, namely, [†] that we ought to purſue Things ſerviceable to the Body and our outward and temporal Welfare, ſo far only as they are uſeful to the immortal Soul. Let this Direction go along with you, and you will find that it will hugely promote the Practice of *Self-denial.*

Laſtly, ACT by a Principle of *Evangelical Faith*, and you will find that that doth wonderfully facilitate the Exerciſe of *Self-denial.* With a ſtedfaſt Eye look beyond this preſent Life; pierce through this Horizon to another World, and you will eaſily reſtrain your ſinful Appetites and Deſires; you will overcome all the Blandiſhments, Suavities, and Allurements of this Life.

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[*] Deſideria naturalia finita ſunt: ex *falſâ* opinione naſcentia, ubi deſinant non habent. Nullus enim terminus falſo eſt. Veritati aliquid extremum eſt: Error immenſus eſt. *Sen.*

[†] Τὰ περὶ τὸ σῶμα μέχρι χρείας τῆς ψυχῆς παραλαμβάνειν.

AND thus I have finiſh'd the Task I undertook, that is, I have ſhew'd you the *Nature* of *Self-denial*: I have diſplay'd the *Reaſonableneſs* of it; and I have alſo directed you to the *Means* for the obtaining of it. If you would not be ruffled by boiſterous Paſſions; if you are deſirous to be tutor'd and diſciplin'd by Virtue; if you would exerciſe a Sovereignty over all the Faculties of your Minds, and the Propenſions of your Bodies, and make them do Homage to Religion; if you are out of Love with Pride and Self-conceit, Preſumption and Self-confidence, and would be cloathed with Humility and Meekneſs, Innocency and Simplicity; if Severity and Mortification, and an impartial Obedience to God's Will be acceptable to you, then mind the Attainment of this Evangelical Grace, in which all theſe are ſumm'd up and concentre. This is the groundwork of all Religion, and this very Grace likewiſe is the Top-ſtone and entire Completion of it: All other Graces partake of this, and this influences upon them all. In every Act of Religion we make uſe of this Virtue, for we can effect nothing that is Good and Praiſe-worthy, unleſs we renounce our corrupt Deſires and Wills. It may be truly ſaid, that every Grace in Chriſtianity is an Act of *Self-denial*.

BESIDES, this is that which promotes and facilitates all our Duties, and reconciles us to all Difficulties, and renders all Eſtates and Conditions welcome, and makes Chriſtians Yoke eaſy and pleaſant. It is the moſt excellent, and it is the moſt uſeful Grace, and that which renders us Maſters of our ſelves.

Latiùs regnes avidum domando
Spiritum, quàm ſi Libiam remotis
Gadibus jungas.

The Chriſtian by this, though he conquers not others, vanquiſheth himſelf, which is the far nobler Victory. This is the Beauty and Luſtre of Religion; this is the reſplendent Virtue of Martyrs and Confeſſors. In a word, it is not only the Crown and Perfection of a Chriſtian's Life here, but of that hereafter. It is both our Preparative to Heaven, and our Happineſs there, where we ſhall voluntarily and chearfully abſtain from all Evil, and wholly confine our Wills to the Will of God.

Of taking up the Croſs,

OR,

Patience under all Kinds of Sufferings.

MAT. xvi. 24.

---- *And take up his Croſs.*

THERE are two great Hinderances and Impediments of Chriſtianity, the one Inward, the other Outward. The firſt is *Our ſelves*, the ſecond is, the *Afflictions* and *Croſſes* of the World. The former muſt be *denied*, the latter *taken up*. I have already treated of *Self-denial*, which is the Virtue moſt properly appertaining to a proſperous Condition. Now I muſt ſpeak of that Grace which is proper to the *Adverſe* and *Afflicted* State, and that is, *Taking up the Croſs*. As in Morals, *Fortitude* excels *Temperance*; ſo in Chriſtianity, *Taking up the Croſs* ſurpaſſes *Self-denial*; for Paſſive Valour is more difficult, and therefore more noble and heroical than the Active one. This Chriſtian and Evangelical Grace is very *fitly* placed here next to denying our ſelves, and ſo is made another Qualification of a Diſciple or Follower of Chriſt; for he that hath denied himſelf, and abandon'd his own corrupt Will and Deſires, is ready to *ſuffer*, he is prepared to *take up his Croſs*, that is, to ſuſtain all manner of Afflictions incident to human Nature, and even Death it ſelf.

THIS then is the firſt Propoſition that I ſhall inſiſt upon, That a Chriſtian Man, who is a ſincere Follower of Chriſt, ought patiently to undergo all the Sufferings and Hardſhips, all the Evils and Croſſes of this Life, which divine Providence thinks fit to try him with. The ſecond Propoſition is more particular, and is this, That it is our Duty, not only to ſuffer all the Hardſhips of this Life, but even to lay down our Life it ſelf, if it be requir'd of us. For by *taking up the Croſs* is more eſpecially meant Suffering of Death: For this is an alluſion to the common Cuſtom of the Times and Place wherein our Saviour was; which was this; the condemn'd Malefactors us'd to carry the Croſs, whereon they were to ſuffer. Accordingly we read, that Chriſt bore his Croſs.

Firſt, I ſhall conſider the Words more generally, and ſhew, That it is our Duty and Concern to entertain with Patience and Submiſſion the Afflictions and Croſſes of what kind ſoever, which are our Allotment in this World. In proſecution of which great Truth, 1. I will explain the *Nature* of this Patience and Submiſſion. 2. I will offer thoſe *Reaſons* and *Arguments* which are proper to induce us to put this Duty in practice. 3. I will anſwer ſome *Objections* which may be rais'd againſt it. 4. I will ſhut up the whole, with ſome proper *Inferencse*.

As to the firſt, namely, THE *Nature* of that *Patience* which is requir'd of us under our Croſſes and Afflictions, it contains in it theſe following Things (all of which are either of the Eſſence of the Duty, or they are neceſſary Attendants and inſeparable Conſequences of it. And indeed, this Duty is large and comprehenſive; it is rather a Conſtellation and Conjunction of many Virtues, than one ſingle Grace ſhining by it ſelf.) 1. An inward Calmneſs and Serenity of Mind. 2. A refraining from Words of Impatience and Diſcontent. 3. A humble Confeſſion of Sin, and at the ſame time an Acknowledgment of God's Righteouſneſs. 4. Hope and waiting upon God for Deliverance. 5. Thankfulneſs and Rejoicing.

Firſt, CHRISTIAN Patience imports a quiet and ſedate Temper of Mind, and ſhuts out all Inward Repining and Murmuring. *Truly my Soul is ſilent unto God* (for ſo 'tis in the *Hebrew* Text) ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. lxii. 1. There is a *Silence* of the Soul, and that is when we do not fret within our own Breaſts; when our Hearts do not boil with impatient Thoughts and Deſires; when we are not inwardly diſſatisfied with the Condition which God is pleas'd to bring us into. We being of weak and ſhallow Conceptions, are not able to dive into the Reaſons of God's various Diſpenſations to Mankind, but we ought to be fully perſwaded of this, that he diſpoſeth of all Things to the beſt and higheſt Ends, and therefore we ought to ſit down in Silence, and give up our ſelves entirely to his good Pleaſure.

Secondly, THERE is not only a Silence of the *Soul*, but of the *Tongue*, which is another Ingredient of this Duty. This excludes all repining Words, all deſponding Language. See this in the Practice of the Man after God's own Heart, *Pſal.* xxxviii. v. 12, &c. *They alſo that ſeek after my Life, lay Snares for me, and they that ſeek my hurt ſpeak miſchievous Things, and imagine Deceits all the Day long. But I, as a deaf Man heard not; and I was as a dumb Man that openeth not his mouth. Thus I was as a Man that heareth not, and in whoſe mouth are no Reproofs.* And again, *Pſal.* xxxix. 9. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth.* This holy Man's Silence was one Degree of Submiſſion under his Troubles. *Aaron* was an admirable Example of this Kind: When his two Sons were ſlain by Fire from Heaven, for offering ſtrange and unhallow'd Fire on the Altar; 'tis recorded of him, that *he held his peace*, Lev. x. 3. The ſame is ſaid of holy *Job*, *In all this did not Job ſin with his Lips*, Chap. ii. v. 10. And this was the fix'd Reſolution of that great Sufferer, Chap. xl. v. 4, 5. *I will lay my hand upon my mouth: once have I ſpoken, but I will not anſwer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.* This was alſo the Behaviour of the Church under her great and heavy Perſecutions, *Lam.* iii. 28, 29. *She ſitteth alone and keepeth ſilence; ſhe putteth her mouth in the duſt.* Our bleſſed Lord himſelf was an eminent Pattern of this, *As a Sheep before the Shearers is dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth*, Iſa. liii. 7. If we would *hear the Rod, and who hath appointed it*, (as we are adviſ'd by the Prophet *Micah*, Chap. vi. v. 9.) we ought to be *ſtill*, and *hold our peace*, and not break forth into any unſeemly Language. And thus we ſee there is a *double Silence* contain'd in this Grace of Patience; there is the Silence of the Heart and of the Lips: And this latter is a natural Effect and Product of the former; for he that can allay all impatient and turbulent Motions in his Mind, will likewiſe be able to keep the Door of his Mouth, to bar out all Murmuring, and to ſhut out the Voice of Diſcontent. But tho' we are forbid to open our Mouths in any Language of Impatience, yet we are oblig'd to open them,

Thirdly, IN a *humble Confeſſion and Acknowledgment*, which is the next Exertment of the Duty in the Text. True Submiſſion to God in our Afflictions, implies a free Confeſſion of our Sins, as the Cauſe of them. *We have ſinned; do thou, O Lord, unto us what ſeemeth good unto thee*, ſay the penitent *Iſraelites*, Judg. x. 15. There is a ſinful Silence, which we muſt by no means indulge; I mean ſuch a one as hinders us from acknowledging our Sins. The holy *Pſalmiſt* will tell you by ſad Experience how dangerous this Silence is, *Pſal.* xxxii. 3. *When I kept ſilence, my Bones waxed old, thro' my roaring all the day long.* Tho' an afflicted Perſon *roar* out of the Senſe of the Pain and Trouble he lies under, yet he is ſaid *to keep ſilence* at the very ſame time, in reſpect of the Sin and Guilt which he ought to confeſs and lament, but doth not. The *Pſalmiſt* ſoon found out his Remedy, and had recourſe to it, v. 5. *I acknowledged my Sin unto thee, and mine Iniquity have I not hid: I ſaid, I will confeſs my Tranſgreſſions unto the Lord, and thou forgaveſt the Iniquity of my Sin.*

And the Duty I am ſpeaking of, requires not only a humble Confeſſion of our Sins, but likewiſe of God's Juſtice and Righteouſneſs in all that is come upon us. Both theſe are joyn'd together in *Neh.* ix. 33. *Thou art juſt in all that is brought upon us; thou haſt done right, but we have done wickedly.* This owning of the divine Juſtice is thus expreſs'd by the *Pſalmiſt*; *I know, O Lord, that thy Judgments are right, and that thou in Faithfulneſs haſt afflicted me,* Pſal. cxix. 75. I have ſinned, and now reap the deſerved Fruit of it: Wherefore I humble my ſelf before thee, and admire and reverence thy righteous Dealings. This Language, and this excellent Diſpoſition of Mind are the inſeparable Concomitants of true Patience and taking up the Croſs.

Fourthly, This Duty, ſpeaks not only a religious Confeſſion and Humiliation, but likewiſe *Faith* and *Hope*, and *waiting upon* God; a depending on him for Strength to be enabled to bear the Croſs, and for a happy Iſſue out of it. Impatient Perſons complain, that their Puniſhment is greater than they can bear; and their moſt paſſionate Suit is, that it may forthwith be remov'd. But a ſubmiſſive Soul takes up the Prophet *Micah*'s Words, *I will bear the Indignation of the Lord*, Chap. vii. v. 9. and he ſets himſelf in good earneſt to undergo it. *It is good that a Man ſhould both hope and quietly wait for the Salvation of the Lord*, ſaith the Church, *Lam.* iii. 26. In all the Storms and Tempeſts that ariſe, this is the Anchor of pious Souls, and keeps them from daſhing on the Rock of Deſpair. *My Soul, wait thou only upon God, for my Expectation is from him*, Pſal. lxii. 5. *In the way of thy Judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee*, Iſai. xxvi. 8. This Waiting, this Expectation is part of true Submiſſion, as we ſee it in the Example of *Job*: Tho' he was a great Sufferer, and his Condition was not to be parallel'd (ſo deplorable were all the Circumſtances of it) yet he never attempted to free himſelf from his Calamities by any undue Means, but he ſtill continued to wait the divine Pleaſure. *He knoweth the way that I take*, ſaith he; *when he hath tried me, I ſhall come forth as Gold*, Job xxiii. 10. He was willing to ſtay in the Furnace as long as the Almighty thought good, till all his Droſs was taken away. This is a clear Proof, as well as an eſſential Part of true Patience.

Fifthly, This Virtue is accompanied with *Chearfulneſs* and *Rejoicing*, with praiſing and bleſſing of God for his fatherly Love in afflicting. This is the higheſt Degree of this Grace; now *Patience hath its perfect Work*, as St. *James* ſpeaks, Chap. i. 4. This was it, which eſpecially gave the Denomination of *Patient* to holy *Job*: *The Lord gave*, ſaith he, *and the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the Name of the Lord.* Bleſſed be his Name for taking away as well as giving. This was the noble Temper which the Apoſtles and Primitive Chriſtians had obtain'd to: *We rejoice in Tribulation*, Rom. v. 3. *Count it all Joy when ye fall into divers Temptations*, Jam. i. 2. This excellent Spirit made the whole Army of Martyrs ſo valiant and undaunted as they were. This caus'd them to march ſo couragiouſly into the Flames: this made them hug and embrace the Stake, and buy the Truth (the Truth of the Goſpel) with Fire and Fagot into the bargain. This turn'd a Priſon into a Palace; Confinement into the greateſt Freedom; and Shackles into Ornaments. Thus I have briefly finiſh'd the Character of Chriſtian Patience. I have given you a true and impartial Pourtrait of it; and you ſee how large and comprehenſive it is.

The ſecond Thing I undertook, was to offer ſuch *Reaſons* and *Arguments*, as I apprehend may be of Force to excite you to the Practice of this important Duty.

1. Consider, that Impatience and Fretting are no Eaſe at all to us in our Calamities, but on the contrary, they render our Grievances heavier and more intolerable. They do but nail us faſter to the Croſs, and put us to greater and more exquiſite pain. The ſilly Bird entangles and hampers it ſelf by its ſtruggling to free it ſelf from the Snare wherein 'tis catch'd. We never find our ſelves better'd by our Reluctancy: All that we purchaſe by it is a more grievous Durance. The Phraſe of Scripture is, that God *hedgeth us in* by Affliction: And what do we elſe by our repining and fretting, but tare our Fleſh, and rend our ſelves among thoſe Briars and Thorns? An unruly Patient forces the Phyſician to be rigorous: Other Applications muſt be made, when the former Preſcriptions are neglected; and ſometimes the Pains are increas'd hereby, and

the Cure is ſet back, and the Perſon is in danger, and his Life hazarded by theſe ſeverer and harſher Medicaments. In a reſembling manner, our reſtleſs Groanings and impatient Howlings incenſe the Almighty, and cauſe him to continue his Rod upon us; nay, to lay on heavier Strokes, becauſe we behave our ſelves ſo unchriſtianly. It is obſervable, that the *Iſraelites* never found any Mitigation of their Puniſhments and Judgments by their Murmuring againſt God, but they rather lay the longer under the Laſh for it. In the Day of Adverſity then, conſider this, that repining will not prove any Eaſe to us, but rather diſtract and diſcompoſe us, and bring new Evils upon us. By Impatience we macerate our Bodies, and ruffle our Minds, and render both unfit for the ſolemn Exerciſes of Religion; beſides that, we provoke the divine Majeſty to inflict ſorer Evils upon us.

2. WE are to conſider on the other ſide, that Submiſſion and holy Silence are the beſt way to put a happy Period to our Afflictions. It is ſo certainly in the nature of the Thing itſelf, for Patience lightens our Burden: But it is much more ſo by the Order and Appointment of Providence. God is pleaſed to think Thoughts of Mercy and Deliverance, when he beholds our Spirits wrought into a humble Frame. It is the manner of diſcreet Parents to correct that Child leaſt, who they ſee is ſubmiſſive and yielding. In the like ſort doth our heavenly Father deal with his Children, who meekly reſign themſelves to him, and accept of the Puniſhment of their Sins; theſe be ſure ſhall fare the better for ſtooping and ſubmitting. To theſe he will ſay, *I will not always chide, neither will I keep my Anger for ever.* To this Senſe we may interpret thoſe Words of St. *James. You have heard of the Patience of Job, and have ſeen the End of the Lord,* Chap. v. 11. you have ſeen *the End* or *Period* that God put to his Afflictions. He repents of the Evil he hath done to us, when we with Calmneſs and Patience undergo it.

3. THE ſerious Conſideration and Perſwaſion that God is the Author and Diſpoſer of all our Afflictions, is another prevalent Argument to excite us to a humble Submiſſion and Reſignation: This was the Staff which good old *Eli* lean'd and relied upon, that *it is the Lord,* therefore *let him do what ſeemeth him good,* 1 Sam. iii. 18. And on this *Job* built his Patience, *The Lord hath taken away,* Job i. 21. and on this his pious Friends grounded their conſolatory Addreſſes, *Chap.* ii. *v.* 11. where 'tis ſaid, *that they comforted him over all the Evil that the Lord had brought upon him.* This Argument was uſed in the like Caſe by another holy Man, *Pſ.* xxxix. 9. *I was dumb, I opened not my Mouth, becauſe thou didſt it.* Our Saviour without doubt deſigned it as a matter of great Force, when he ſaid to his drooping Diſciples, *It is I, be not afraid,* Mat. iv. 26. It was ſufficient to clear their deſponding Minds, and to create in them a Calm, and ſerenity of Thoughts, that the *Waves* and *Wind,* which they were diſturb'd at, were at his Beck and Diſpoſal: Yea, our Saviour ſuggeſted this to his own Mind, as an Argument of Patience, and Submiſſion to the Death of the Croſs, that it was by the Will and Appointment of his Father, *Shall I not drink of the Cup which my Father hath given me to drink?* And all the adopted Sons of God, amidſt their greateſt Streights, ought to apply this Solace to their Souls, and refreſh their troubled Thoughts with it; that their Afflictions are from their heavenly Father, and are wholly order'd and manag'd by him. It is true, this Conſideration, that our Calamities are from God, hath had a contrary Effect, and hath raiſed ſome Spirits to a prophane Impatience and fretting at the Hand of God. This bad uſe was made of this Doctrine by the wicked King *Jehoram,* who being exhorted by the Prophet *Eliſha* to wait on God for Deliverance, grew deſperate upon it, and cried out, *This Evil is of the Lord, why ſhould I wait for the Lord any longer?* 2 Kings vi. 33. A moſt impious and prophane Concluſion from ſuch Premiſes! Whereas the true and natural Inference ſhould have been this, This Evil is from the Lord, therefore I will patiently bear it; I wait his Time, who alone can remove this Calamity. For this is certain, that if we urge this upon our Minds, that God is the over-ruling Author of all our Troubles and Hardſhips, it will be a great Support of Patience, and an effectual Promoter of it.

4. ANOTHER is this, that we have provoked God by our ill Behaviour, to inflict theſe Temporal Evils upon us. Our Sins have procured our Calamities,

and ſhall we murmur againſt God, againſt whom we have ſinn'd? Guilty Perſons have little Reaſon to be querulous and impatient; which is thus expreſs'd by the Church, *Lam.* iii. 39. *Wherefore doth a living Man complain, a Man for the Puniſhment of his Sins?* It is the higheſt Folly imaginable to complain of God for puniſhing us, when our Miſdemeanors have derived this upon us. This I take to be the Senſe of *Job*'s Words, *Chap.* ix. *v.* 27, 28. *If I ſay* (ſaith he) *I will forget my Complaint, I will leave off my Heavineſs, and comfort my ſelf; I am afraid of all my Sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.* I am ſenſible that I deſerve what I ſuffer; my Afflictions both of Body and Mind are the juſt Reward of my Sins. *If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain?* That is, if my Sins have procured my Sorrow and Miſery, it is an idle and fooliſh Attempt to reſiſt the Almighty, to repine at his Hand, and to plead my Innocence; for *if I waſh my ſelf with Snow Water, and make my Hands never ſo clean,* that is, if I endeavour with the greateſt Art and Induſtry to clear and vindicate my ſelf, my Guilt will appear but yet blacker and the more heinous; *thou ſhalt plunge me in the Ditch; for God is not a Man, as I am, that I ſhould anſwer him.* If I undertake to contend with my Judge, I ſhall certainly be condemn'd; wherefore, I proſtrate my ſelf before him, and ſubmit my Condition to his Providence, and firmly reſolve to lie quiet under his Hand. Thus it appears, that tho' *Job* diſcover'd great Infirmities and Paſſions in his Sufferings, which were in that Degree, that they even oppreſs'd humane Nature; yet here, and at other Times he expreſſes a great Submiſſion to the Almighty, and he particularly refrains from Impatience and Murmuring, on this Condition, that he had provok'd God by his Sins. Let *us* check our ſelves on the ſame Account, and *ſubmit*, becauſe we are *Offenders.* Let us ſay with the afflicted Church in the Prophet *Micah*'s Time, *Chap.* vii. 9. *We will bear the Indignation of the Lord, becauſe we have ſinned againſt him*; yea, let us conſider that we have not only deſerved all that we ſuffer, but much more: As *Zophar* told *Job*, *Know that God exacteth of thee leſs than thine Iniquity deſerveth*, Chap. xi. 6. which is the ſame with that humble Confeſſion, in *Ezra* ix. 13. *Thou, O Lord, haſt puniſhed us leſs than our Iniquities deſerve.* Where then is there any Plea for Impatience?

5. It ſhould be a great Support and Stay to our Minds, to conſider the vaſt Advantages which accrue to us by the bodily and temporal Croſſes, which are our Allotment in this Life: Every good Man is a Gainer by his Croſſes and Diſtreſſes. The Refiner caſts the Gold into the Fire, not to make it worſe, but better, namely, by purifying it. Such is the Deſign of God in bringing his Children into the Furnace of Affliction; it is to refine and purge them, that the Trial of their Faith being much more precious than that of Gold that periſheth, being tried with Fire, might be found unto Praiſe, and Honour, and Glory, at the Appearance of Jeſus Chriſt, 1 *Pet.* i. 7. The Diſtreſſes which befal the Righteous are not Penalties, but fatherly Corrections and Chaſtiſements, and prove inſtrumental to the begetting not only of Faith, but all other Graces of the Holy Spirit in them. *Tribulation worketh Patience, and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope*, as the Apoſtle ſaith; and he might have added ſundry other Graces and Virtues, as the Effect of ſanctified Tribulation. This muſt needs be very advantagious to them, ſeeing God is more ſignally preſent with them in the Day of Calamity and Trouble; for that is his particular Promiſe and Engagement to them, that *he will be with them in Trouble*, Pſa. xci. 15. By this gracious Preſence of his he ſupports them, ſo that it is impoſſible they ſhould ſink under their Burden, be it never ſo heavy and preſſing upon them. *The Lord upholdeth them with his Hand*, Pſa. xxxvii. 24. They are now more eminently under the Care and Tuition of Heaven: Their merciful High Prieſt is *touch'd with the feeling of their Infirmities*, Heb. iv. 15. his Bowels of Compaſſion are moved towards them. Thus they find that of St. *James* experimentally verify'd, *Happy is the Man whom the Lord correcteth*; which is the comfortable Aphoriſm that upholds the afflicted Servants of God. They are *Happy*, becauſe their Afflictions are fatherly Chaſtiſements for their Failings, and are ſerviceable to work the peaceable Fruit of Righteouſneſs in them, and are Tokens of the divine Favour. *It is good for me that I have been Afflicted*, ſaid that holy Man, who had been tried with variety of Afflictions and Troubles. He profeſſes that he experimentally found that they conduced to the greateſt Good, and were proper Inſtruments of Virtue and Piety. And *we* may have Experience of the

ſame, if our Afflictions be rightly improved; for is it not *good* to have our Sins purg'd away? Is is not *good* to have our Graces put to the Trial, and then increaſed and confirm'd? Is it not *good* to have our Souls prepared for Heaven? This and a great deal more is the reſult of ſanctified Afflictions. We may then truly ſay, *good Poverty*, *good Sickneſs*, *good Diſgrace*, *good Diſappointments* and *Loſſes*, becauſe they are uſeful to make us *Good*. Why ſhould we think ill of what is productive of ſuch happy Effects? Or rather, why do we not thank God for it? Say that a Righteous Man is bereft of his worldly Goods, and is left to grapple with Want and Neceſſity, yet ſtill he may be *rich towards God*, and abound in all Grace and Virtue. None can rob him of his Integrity; he can pray, he can believe and truſt in God; he can love him, and be loved by him, and none can take away his Title to Bleſſedneſs. Hath not ſuch a Perſon then Encouragement to take up and bear his Croſs with a ſubmiſſive and chearful Mind?

6thly and laſtly. A STEADY View of future Happineſs will effectually promote this. The Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* tells us, that the Chriſtian Sufferers in thoſe Times *endured a great Fight of Affliction, and took joyfully the ſpoiling of their Goods, knowing in themſelves that they had in Heaven a better, and an enduring Subſtance*, Heb. x. 34. The Thoughts of this ſolaced their Minds in their greateſt Perplexities and Difficulties; they could chearfully part with this Worlds Goods, when they contemplated the durable Riches of the Life to come. They could contentedly quit their earthly Habitations, when they call'd to mind the many Manſions in their Father's Houſe. They could trample upon Earth when their Thoughts were fill'd with Heaven. The foreſaid inſpired Writer gives us an eminent Inſtance of this in *Moſes*, the Man of God, who was animated in all his Sufferings, and enabled to deſpiſe the fading Glory of this World, by having his Eye fix'd on the other World, and the Rewards laid up there for the Righteous. *He refuſed to be called the Son of* Pharoah's *Daughter*; which certainly was a Title of great Honour, and would have been attended with as great Preferments and Advantages; but *he choſe rather to ſuffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleaſures of Sin for a Seaſon*; *eſteeming the Reproach of Chriſt* (or for Chriſt) *greater Riches than the Treaſures of Egypt*, Heb: xi. 24, 25. If you would know what it was that made him act thus, the next Words will inform you, *For he had reſpect unto the recompence of the Reward.* This holy Man * *look'd up* (ſo 'tis in the Original) to the Crown of Glory; he had this continually in his Eye, and this chear'd and enliven'd him. The ſame divine Author in this Chapter acquaints us, that the Prophets and holy Men of old, *were tortured, not accepting Deliverance, that they might obtain a better Reſurrection*, *v.* 35. The Expectation of that Reſt which remains for God's People, encourag'd them to bear the Troubles and Miſeries of this Life; yea, the moſt exquiſite Torments and Pains that could be inflicted on them, with an undaunted Patience. They comforted themſelves with this, that the Storms and Tempeſts that they met with here, were the Forerunners of a future Calm; and that theſe Bluſtering Winds which batter'd their Veſſels, would moſt happily drive them to a ſafe Shore. Their Crown of Thorns would make way for one of Glory, The Evils they ſuffer'd on Earth would fit them for the Fruition of Heaven. Thus we ſee how we may lay the Foundation of an entire Submiſſion to God under the greateſt Streights and Evils that can befall us.

THE third general Head obliges me to anſwer ſome *Objections* which may be raiſed in defence, or at leaſt in excuſe of *Impatience*. Firſt, Some plead that their Afflictions are *great* and *heavy*; others, that they are *many* and *numerous*; and ſome complain of the exceſſive *length* of them; but upon all three Accounts, they are concluded to be too difficult to be born with Patience.

I BEGIN with the firſt Plea, and that is this, No body's Caſe is ſo bad is mine; ſo great are my Troubles, ſo heavy is my Burden. I ſee that many have no Afflictions, but I can't ſee that any one is viſited in that Degree that I am. To which I anſwer,

1. ALL Perſons are generally inclined to think that their own Troubles are the greateſt, and that none have the like. It is as 'twere, natural to Men in Diſtreſs, to imagine, that none are ſo miſerable as themſelves; but they do not know what Preſſures others lie under and are tormented with. But 2dly, Suppoſe that thy Diſtreſſes and Grievances far exceed thoſe of ſome others, yet

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* Ἀπέϐλεπε.

there is no room for Impatience, if thou conſidereſt theſe following Particulars,

1. It may be thou haſt great and ſtrong Luſts, and theſe muſt be extirpated by Afflictions of that Quality. The Remedy muſt be proportion'd to the Diſeaſe. Leſſer Afflictions would not awaken and rouze thee out of thy Security, would not ſtir thee up to fly to God, and to beg Mercy and Pardon; even as Men do not repair to a Phyſician for a ſmall Indiſpoſition, or to a Surgeon for a Scratch. Or,

2. Perhaps thou art one on whom God hath beſtowed great and vigorous Graces, and tis his Pleaſure that theſe ſhould be exercis'd, and the Degrees of them manifeſted. Strong Faith and Love will endure ſtrong Trials. The greater Ability and Strength thou haſt, the greater is the Burthen which thou may'ſt expect to be laid upon thee.

3. Great Afflictions make way for great temporal Bleſſings. When Men intend to build high, they lay the Foundation very low. So when God deſigns to raiſe a Man, he is wont to depreſs him with heavy Calamities, and lay him in the Duſt. This we ſee in the Examples of *Joſeph*, of *Job*, of *David*, and ſeveral others.

4. Great Afflictions make way for great ſpiritual Bleſſings; that is, the increaſe of Grace and Holineſs, and the manifeſting them to the World. *Abraham*'s Faith was inhans'd by the greatneſs of his Trial, and he became the Pattern of Belief to all ſucceeding Ages. *David* was exercis'd with more than ordinary Afflictions, and accordingly the Exertments of his Devotion and Piety were extraordinary.

5. It is to be conſider'd, that no Affliction is ſo great but God can deliver thee out of it; and 'tis his uſual Method to magnify his Power and Wiſdom, by delivering his Servants out of the greateſt: As the removing of a ſlight Diſtemper doth not ſo much redound to the Honour of the Phyſician, as the curing of a very dangerous and deſperate Diſeaſe; this latter highly commends his Art and Skill.

Another Complaint is this, My Afflictions are *many* and *various*, and heap'd upon me in great Numbers, and this is it that ſhocks my Patience, and even deſtroys it. I ſhall anſwer,

1. Are not thy Sins *many*, and often repeated? And then 'tis no wonder that thy Croſſes are ſo too. Thou canſt not juſtly complain of the Variety of thy Grievances, when thou reflecteſt on the Multitude of thy Offences.

2. There is ſometimes a Neceſſity of the Multiplicity of Afflictions, becauſe what one doth not effect, another muſt. If one medicinal Application proves ineffectual towards the removing a Diſeaſe, 'tis proper to ſubmit to others which may be more ſucceſsful.

3. If we were us'd to one ſort of Affliction only, it would become familiar to us, ſo that we ſhould not mind it, and conſequently it would not be ſerviceable to us; as ſometimes Phyſick of one ſort, if often taken loſes its virtue.

4. Let us not immoderately lament and bemoan our Condition, as if we were the only Perſons that had many Afflictions heap'd upon us. If we look into the ſacred Records, we ſhall find that the beſt and holieſt Men have been treated after this manner. Their Calamities and Diſtreſſes have been many, and of divers Kinds. The good Patriarch *Jacob*'s Life, was fill'd with Variety of Evils. He left his Parents, and took a long Journey alone, and met with hard Lodging, and when he was arrived at his Uncle's Quarters, his Entertainment was very coarſe; he was ſcorch'd by Day, and frozen by Night, and had his Wages often chang'd; and (which was the moſt ſenſible Diſaſter) his *Rachel* was kept from him. He was purſu'd like a Thief by *Laban*, and his Brother *Eſau* came out againſt him with a formidable Band of Men. The Loſs of *Rachel*, who died in Travel, was a poinant Grief to him. *Dinah*, his only Daughter, was deflower'd; his Sons *Simeon* and *Levi* imbru'd their Hands in the Blood of the *Sichemites*: His Son *Reuben* was inceſtuous; *Judah* corrupted his Siſter *Tamar*; *Joſeph*, who ſhould have been the Staff and Comfort of his old Age, was ſold by his Brethren: The ill Succeſs of *Simeon* in *Egypt*, and the retaining of *Benjamin* there, were great Mortifications to this indulgent Parent. And other ill Uſages, Diſappointments, Loſſes and Troubles made the Life of this

good Man very uneaſy. So that tho' he truly ſaid, *Few and evil have the Days of the Years of my Life been*, yet he might with as great Truth have ſaid, *many* and *evil* were the Occurrences which I had experience of.

I might inſtance next in *Job*, whoſe Sufferings were as remarkable for their Multitude, as for their Greatneſs. One Meſſenger came after another, and brought the dreadful Tidings of new Calamities: And if we peruſe the Hiſtory of his Troubles, we ſhall ſee that they were Univerſal, and of all Kinds, reſpecting his Body, his Mind, his Goods, his Friends, his neareſt Relations. I might mention *David* and all his Troubles: *Saul* perſecuted him; his Son *Ammon* commited Inceſt, and was ſlain by another Son, namely, *Abſalom*: And this Son, who was ſo dear to him, rebell'd againſt him, and at laſt came to an ill end. The neighbouring Nations took up Arms againſt him, and reduc'd him to great Streights. His Sins procur'd him an unſpeakable Sorrow and Anguiſh, and embitter'd his Days with penitential Agonies. The *Diverſity* of St. *Paul's* Sufferings is particularly ſet down by himſelf, in 2 *Cor.* xi. and he is ſo far from being impatient under them that he glories in them.

5. ARE the Afflictions of good Men *many* and *various*? So are their Comforts: As the fore-mention'd Apoſtle teſtifies, *As our Sufferings abound, ſo our Conſolation alſo aboundeth*, 2 *Cor.* i. 5. And it might be ſhew'd, That there is a particular Comfort in Scripture for every diſtinct Croſs. Yea, the very Diverſity and Multitude of them ſhall conſpire for our Welfare; *they work together for good*, Rom. viii. 28.

Sixthly and laſtly, God is able to reſcue us out of many Evils and Diſtreſſes as well as out of a ſingle one. *He delivereth in ſix Troubles, yea, in ſeven*; that is, in ſundry and various Troubles, *Job* v. 5.

BUT the Complaint riſes yet higher; My Afflictions are not only *great* and *many*, but *long* and *tedious*; inſomuch that my Patience will be tired out before they leave me. But conſider,

1. WHETHER they are not ſhort in compariſon of the many Days and Years of Eaſe, Health and Plenty that thou haſt had. If thou ſetteſt one in the Balance againſt the other; this may be ſerviceable to mitigate thy Grief, and to contribute towards a patient Submiſſion to the divine Hand; as we ſee in the Example of *Job*, *Shall we receive good at the hand of God*, ſaith he, *and ſhall we not receive evil?* Job ii. 10.

2. IT may be, thy Sins have been a long time indulg'd by thee, and then thou haſt no reaſon to repine at the length of thy Afflictions. It is juſt in God to retaliate in this manner.

3. THINK of this, that thy Afflictions are long, that they may accompliſh the Work for which they were ſent. Thy Luſts and evil Habits have been long growing, and are now rooted and faſtened in thee: Wherefore there is need of ſome laſting Croſs to root them out.

4. ART not thou conſcious to thy ſelf, that God hath a long time call'd thee to Repentance, and yet thou haſt not been obſequious to that merciful Call? What Ground then haſt thou to complain of thy long and continued Afflictions, which are a juſt Puniſhment and Chaſtiſement for thy Delays?

5. Complain not of the *Length* of thy Afflictions, ſeeing they may be ſerviceable to prevent the *eternal* and *never-failing* Torments of Hell.

6. THY Afflictions are of more than ordinary Duration; that they may ſufficiently exerciſe thy Faith and all other Graces, and make them conſpicuous and renowned. Be not impatient, that thy Patience, as well as other Virtues and Endowments is tried and prov'd.

7. ARE thy Afflictions of great Continuance? So are the Conſolations of God's Servants. *With everlaſting Kindneſs will I have Mercy on thee*, Iſai. liv. 8. And 'tis promis'd, that *the Comforter ſhall abide with us for ever*, John xiv. 16.

8. CONSIDER that thy Afflictions ſhall laſt no longer, not a Day, not an Hour longer than God hath appointed. *Our Times are in God's Hand*, Pſal. xxxi. 15. The preciſe Time of *Tribulation* is ſet, *Rev.* ii. 10.

9. THE longeſt Troubles exceed not the Term of our Lives; and theſe are reckon'd to be of no long Continuance. Life is ſhort, and therefore Affliction can't be very long.

10. And laſtly, Our longeſt Preſſures and Troubles are but ſhort in compariſon of future Glory. The Apoſtle St. *James* might well ſay, *Bleſſed is the Man that endureth Temptation*; *for when he is tried, he ſhall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him*, Jam. i. 12. An Eternity of Happineſs will make amends for the longeſt Affliction. The *eternal weight of Glory* (as the Apoſtle ſtiles it) will outweigh the moſt laſting Calamities of this Life.

I am now in the Fourth and laſt Place to *reflect* on what hath been ſaid, and to make ſome proper *Improvement* of it. I have diſplay'd the Nature of Chriſtian Patience and taking up the Croſs: I have aſſign'd the Reaſons and Motives which may engage you to put it in Practice: And I have endeavour'd to remove the Impediments which lie in the way to it. It only remains now, that according to St. *James*'s Exhortation, *we let Patience have its perfect Work*, Jam. i. 4. Finiſh all the Parts of it, labour to be well acquainted with all that is contain'd in it. Bear up with a chearful Spirit in the midſt of all Calamities, yet withal lie low in the Senſe of your own Unworthineſs which procured thoſe Evils, and merited worſer. Murmur not againſt God, rather cry out againſt your Sins; and if any Impatience will needs break forth, let it be againſt your ſelves. Keep the Doors of your Lips, that ye ſpeak not; watch the Doors of your Hearts, that you think and conceive not any thing with any ſhew of Repining and Diſcontent. Confeſs your Vileneſs, acknowledge your Guilt, ſubmit to the Strokes of Heaven. Bear the Yoke which Providence hath caſt upon your Neck, ſtruggle not with Omnipotency, ſtrive not to be freed from your Croſs by the uſe of indirect and unlawful Means.

It is true, we muſt not call Evils to us: *I have not deſired the woful Day, thou knoweſt*, ſaith the Prophet *Jeremiah*, Jer. xvii. 6. and we may ſay ſo too: We are not to court our Croſſes, and to beg they may be laid upon us; but when they are, we ought to bear them with Patience and Contentment. Chriſtian Fortitude, or taking up the Croſs, is not unadvis'd Raſhneſs, or a Love of Dangers. We call not that Soldier valorous who ventures on the Mouth of the Cannon, or runs upon drawn Swords, when he may as well ſtep aſide, and avoid them. He is no true Follower of Jeſus, who unadviſedly and needleſly thruſts himſelf into Calamities; but when it ſeems good to the great Diſpoſer of all Things to inflict theſe upon him, it is his Duty to entertain them with Thankfulneſs, and chearfully to ſubmit himſelf to the diſpoſal of the Almighty. If he labour under bodily Pains and Diſeaſes; if he be pinch'd with Need and Poverty; if he be ſlander'd and defam'd; if he be in Priſon and Confinement, or if he be baniſh'd from his Native Country (which is an Impriſoning at large) or whatever other Calamity befalls him, he undergoes it with patience and alacrity.

Especially having ſuch excellent Principles as the Goſpel furniſhes us with, let our Patience in bearing the Croſs outvie that of the moſt noted and celebrated Moraliſts of Old. The Profeſſors of the *Stoick* Philoſophy were famous for enduring their Sufferings with contented Minds: And in all their Diſcourſes they undertook to arm Men againſt the Evils of this Life, and to harden them againſt all the Diſtreſſes of the World. Thoſe great Maſters of Ethics and Phyſicians of Manners, preſcrib'd ſeveral Cures and Antidotes againſt the Contagion of that fretting and peeviſh Diſeaſe of Impatience. They levell'd many grave Sentences againſt it, and by odd and quaint Precepts they attempted to delude that Vice. But it is the Chriſtian Religion only that is able, by virtue of its excellent Principles, to afford a ſolid and laſting Foundation of Patience. Therefore let us outdo a *Cato*, a *Socrates*, a *Seneca*, and the whole Race of Philoſophers, who were deſtitute of thoſe Arguments which we abound with from the Writings of the Apoſtles. We read, that among the *Pagans* there were ſtrong Inſtances of Patience, and incredible Hardneſs in enduring Torments. The *Lacedemonian* Youths at their Altars; the Gameſters at *Olympia*; the Fencers in the *Roman* Amphitheaters, underwent the ſharpeſt Pains and Tortures, without the leaſt complaining. *Scipio* bragg'd, that there was not a Man in his numerous Army that would not for one Word of his Mouth climb up a high Tower, and thence caſt himſelf head-long into the Sea. But all this is ſhort of the Chriſtian Fortitude, and the evangelical Grace of Patience, as I have deſcrib'd it. Wherefore let us ſtrive to be Maſters of this excellent Endowment, and to that purpoſe let us make uſe of thoſe Conſiderations and Arguments which I before propounded. And to quicken our Endeavours, I will add this to what I have ſaid, To bear our Croſs with ſubmiſſive Minds, is a ſignal Evidence of true Goodneſs in us; it is a Proof of our ſincere Love to God, and it teſtifies that we are ready to do and ſuffer yet more for our Lord. And beſides, what greater Demonſtration can there be of our hearty and real Belief of another World after this, and of Rewards laid up for righteous Souls? Likewiſe it is a ſign that we love Virtue for it ſelf, and reſpect Goodneſs for its own ſake. It clearly evidences, that we did not wed it merely for its Dowry; for the outward Advantages it might bring along with it, but that we embrac'd it from a Principle of pure Love, and Delight in it: Which is as fair a Teſtimony as can be of our Sincerity and a ſettled Goodneſs. I will conclude with what a learned and antient Father ſaith, and particularly endeavours to make good, * That all thoſe excellent Things ſaid of *Charity*, in 1 *Cor.* 13. flow from the Grace which I have been diſcourſing of, namely, *Patience and Submiſſion to the Hand of God.*

* Tertul. l. de Patientiâ, cap. 15.

Thus I have finiſh'd the more *general Propoſition* which was founded on the Text; now I proceed to the *particular* and *ſpecial one*, which is this, That it is our Duty as we are true Followers of Chriſt, to lay down our Lives for his Sake. This is the higheſt Senſe of our Saviour's Words, when he bids us *take up his Croſs.* He puts us here upon the hardeſt Task of all Chriſtianity. When our Blood is thirſted after by unmerciful and wicked Men, and we cannot eſcape without the violating of God's Laws and our own Conſciences, we muſt conclude then that we are called to ſuffer Martyrdom, and we muſt (as our Saviour before *Pontius Pilate*) make a good Confeſſion, and maintain the Cauſe of Jeſus, and be content to part with our Lives for his Sake.

It is true, the Name of Death is terrible, the Thing itſelf much more ſo. Conſequently Life is ſweet and pleaſant, grateful and deſirable. As the Philoſopher ſaid of Pleaſure, if a Man be ask'd why he lov'd it, it is ſufficient Anſwer to ſay, becauſe it is Pleaſure. In the like manner it may be anſwer'd to the Demand concerning *Life*; it is loved for it ſelf, its own Excellency makes us prize it. Hence it is that a Love of Life hath poſſeſſed all Mankind, and it is impoſſible to raviſh this from them. He that was a Liar from the Beginning, ſpake a certain Truth when he ſaid, *Skin for Skin, and all that a Man hath will he give for his Life.* There is ſuch a friendly Alliance between the Soul and the Body, that they naturally deſire not to be ſeparated from one another. Hence the fixed Law of Nature teacheth Men to preſerve Life, and to avoid all Things that may be deſtructive of it. That famous Warrior (in *Homer*) whoſe Trade it was to expoſe and venture his *Life*, yet valued it above all the *Wealth of Troy*, and the *whole World beſides.* It is the chief Care and Deſign of Men to ſecure this, whatever elſe they loſe. They are content to undergo the ſharpeſt Torments, to endure the moſt exquiſite Miſeries, rather than leave this World, this beloved World. They are ſo deeply in love with Life, that they are ready to ſhake Hands with any Thing to hold this faſt; and this they generally do, becauſe they know when Life is gone it cannot be recovered again; or becauſe they believe there is no other Life, and ſo they make ſure of ſomething now; or becauſe they look for no Good in another Life, they fear they ſhall be hall'd to Judgment for the Enormities they have been guilty of here. This makes them fond of this preſent Being, and careful to preſerve it, by what Ways and Methods they can invent.

But a Chriſtian Man though he hath a true Senſe of the Worth and Value of his Life, and will not, dares not throw it away; yet if his Circumſtances be ſuch, that he muſt either *part with This* or his *Religion*, he willingly chuſeth, the former; and *he counts not his Life dear to him* (as the † Apoſtle ſpeaks) *ſo that he may finiſh his Courſe with Joy*, ſo he may diſcharge his Duty, and keep a good Conſcience; but the more dear and valuable his Life is, the more ready is he to lay it down for his Redeemer's Sake. Becauſe it is the moſt precious Thing he hath, therefore he is deſirous to part with it, and if he had a Thouſand Lives, he would eſteem them a due Sacrifice to his Service.

† Acts xx. 4.

If you enquire into the *Reaſons* of this, you will find our Saviour himſelf ſuggeſting thoſe to you which are impregnable. Immediately after the Text he ſubjoins, *For whoſoever will ſave his Life ſhall loſe it, and whoſoever will loſe his Life for my Sake ſhall find it.* This is the *firſt Reaſon* why we ought to *take up the Croſs*, and even to *die for Chriſt's Sake*; namely, becauſe that Man who † *will* ſave his Life, who is reſolved by renouncing his Religion, and by venturing on any Thing though it be never ſo wicked, to preſerve his temporal Life, *he ſhall* certainly loſe it; for, ſay that he weathers out a little Time here, yet he may not improperly be ſaid to *loſe his Life*, becauſe he loſes the *Comfort* of it; for God is ſeen frequently to inflict ſome remarkable Plague and Judgment, on his Body or Eſtate, or on thoſe in whom he is moſt nearly concern'd, which makes his Life uneaſy and burthenſome, and ſometimes ſo intolerable, that he violently rids himſelf of it. Or, ſuppoſe he takes not this Courſe, yet his Breaſt is fill'd with Guilt and Horror, with Regret and Anguiſh when he looks back on what he hath done; and if he looks forward towards Death and the Grave, he trembles yet more, and the Terrors of Hell ſeize on his diſtracted Soul. Or, ſay that he hath ſo harden'd himſelf in Sin, that he feels no Remorſe on his Mind, and hath no Senſe of his vile and curſed Actions, his Caſe is yet more miſerable, his Condition is the more deplorable and dangerous, and the Flames of Hell only can awaken and rouze ſuch a Man; and that is the Place he is haſtening to. By being over-fond of his temporal Life, he loſes that which is eternal; he plunges himſelf into the Regions of Everlaſting Death, there to lament for ever the groſs Folly and Madneſs of his paſt Actions: Thus the Man's goodly Deſign is fruſtrated, for he intended to *ſave* and preſerve *his Life*, but by this means *he loſeth it.*

† Ὃς ἂν ϑέλη.

On the other Hand our Lord aſſures us, that *he that loſeth his Life ſhall find it*; that is, he that ſeems to loſe his Life by laying it down for the Sake of Chriſt, ſhall find it abundantly compenſated by the Purchaſe of Eternal Life and Glory. He adventures his frail mortal Life, which perhaps might have expired a few Hours or Days after, and inſtead of it he is rewarded with a laſting and durable Life, a Life of endleſs Joy and Happineſs in the higheſt Heavens. Tho' the Righteous fall a Sacrifice to the Malice of implacable Men, yet they are receiv'd by God into the Manſions of Glory, where they ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the Stars for ever and ever. [*In the ſight of the unwiſe they ſeem to die, and their Departure is taken for Miſery, and their going from us to be utter Deſtruction; but they are in Peace; for though they be puniſh'd in the ſight of Men, yet is their Hope full of Immortality; and having been a little chaſtiſed, they ſhall be greatly rewarded; for God proved them, and found them worthy for himſelf*, 3 Wiſd. 1. &c.] But a more Authentick Penman acquaints us, that *if we be faithful to the Death, Chriſt will give us a Crown of Life*, Rev. ii. 13. Why then do we not ſuffer rather than ſin? Why do we not chuſe to be afflicted rather than to offend God? Why do we not lay down our Lives rather than relinquiſh the Faith? If we loſe our Lives here we ſhall find 'em hereafter. Let the Conſideration of this make you willing to ſlight your bodily Lives for the Sake of Jeſus, and to entertain Death in whatſoever Shape it appears.

Again, our Saviour ſuggeſts the like Arguments in other Words, in the Verſe but one after my Text, *For what is a Man profited*, ſaith he, *if he ſhall gain the whole World and loſe his own Soul? Or what ſhall a Man give in exchange for his Soul?* As if he had ſaid, ſuppoſe a Man's immoderate Love of the World, ſhould hinder him from adhering to me; ſuppoſe he doth not quit his worldly Intereſt for a good Conſcience; ſuppoſe he ſecures his Earthly Enjoyments and Poſſeſſions as well as Life it ſelf, yet this happening with the Loſs of his Soul, he cannot be ſaid to be a Gainer, yea, he is an unſpeakable Loſer. Whereas, (be it known to him) the parting with Life it ſelf for my Sake (though it ſeems to be ſo harſh and difficult a Thing) ſhall prove to him at laſt the moſt *profitable* and *advantagious* Performance: Though he diſregards his Life, and with that his worldly Goods, yet he is certain of an endleſs Life, and of durable and ſubſtantial Riches in another World. This Gain is far to be preferred before that, for by this he ſaves his Soul, and purchaſeth everlaſting Bliſs and Happineſs; but by the other he infallibly *loſeth*, *i. e.* damneth his Soul, and makes himſelf miſerable to endleſs Ages. This is our *Saviour's* Reaſoning, and it is very ſtrong and nervous.

Nay, the wiſeſt Men among the Heathens had attain'd to a Senſe of this great Truth: The *Stoicks*, who were much for Self-preſervation, and held it to be the firſt and chief Principle of Philoſophy, declared, that nothing conduces to Self-preſervation ſo much as *Temperance* and *Abſtinence*, their two Parts of Morality, eſpecially the former (which is the ſame with *Fortitude*, which puſhes a Man on even to lay down his Life) is the higheſt Act of Self-preſervation; for he that parts with his Life in a good Cauſe, preſerves his true ſelf, *i. e.* his Soul. The Philoſophers could talk in this manner; and ſhall not *Chriſtians* not only ſpeak, but act after this rate? They are aſcertain'd, that all the Power which the Devil and his Agents (how outragious ſoever they are) are able to exert, is over their Bodies only: They may batter down theſe Houſes of Clay, theſe crazy Tenements, which would fall in a ſhort Time of themſelves, but the immortal Soul or Spirit that lodges in them is inviolable, impregnable, unconquerable, they cannot reach this.

It is true, Satan's Malice ſometimes hath not ceas'd with the *Death* of Holy Men, but he hath incited Men of Violence to dig them out of their Graves, after they have lain there a conſiderable Time, and to burn their Bones, when their Souls were out of their reach. The Examples of this fooliſh and childiſh Malice are well known in Martyrology. But when that envious Spirit hath done his worſt, he cannot really hurt the Servants of God; for though *he can kill their Bodies*, and diſturb their Aſhes, yet he is *not able to kill their Souls*, as our Saviour ſpeaks, *Mat.* x. 28. However the outward Man may be evilly treated, the Gates of Hell ſhall never prevail againſt the inward and ſpiritual Part. Wherefore, comfort one another with theſe Words.

If any of you *object* the *Difficulty* of this Task of laying down your Lives, I anſwer briefly, that this doth not uſe to diſcourage you in other Matters, and therefore there is no Reaſon it ſhould in this. How many are there, who never think of Martyrdom, that undertake Things very irkſome and uneaſy to the Fleſh? To mention only this one Thing, what do not ſome undergo for their Health? The Woman that had a deſire to be cured, and that but of an Iſſue of Blood, *ſuffer'd many Things of the Phyſicians*, Mark v. 26. To be recover'd of a Diſeaſe with painful Medicines, what torturing Applications are ſubmitted to? The *Patient* endures more for his Health's Sake than any *Martyrs* ever did for their Religion. And ſhall not the Hopes, yea, Aſſurance of Heaven prevail as much with us, as the Probability of being healed of ſome bodily Diſtemper? Shall not the Salvation of our Souls, and their endleſs Felicity in the other World be a more powerful Conſideration, than the Eaſe and Health of our Bodies in this fickle and uncertain State we are in here? This then being ſo highly accountable and reaſonable,

Let us in the firſt place explode and reject the Doctrine of the *Gnoſticks*, who taught (as * *Euſebius* and † other ancient Writers tell us) that it was a Thing indifferent in Times of Perſecution to deny the Faith, and to renounce their former Profeſſion, that they might ſave their Lives: They would by no means ſuffer Death, if there were any way to avoid it. And our Modern *Gnoſticks*, the *Hobbiſts* and *Atheiſts*, and others who have no Religion, or thoſe that are prepared to have any, are of this Perſwaſion and Reſolve. But herein they bid Defiance to the Doctrine of *Jeſus*, who commands us to *take up the Croſs*, to ſacrifice even our Lives for him, if we be called to it. And what I have ſaid in purſuit of our Saviour's *Reaſons* adjoin'd to the Text, is a further Proof of theſe Mens egregious Folly; for whilſt they ſave their Lives, they loſe them; whilſt they are kind to themſelves in ſparing their Bodies, they are moſt inhumane and cruel in damning their Souls.

* Eccleſ. Hiſt. l. 4. c. 3.

† Clem. Alex. Strom. l 4. Tertullian. Scorpiac. adv. Gnoſtic.

Secondly, Let us not be guilty of this damnable Folly, but let us liſten to our Maſter's Command, and weigh the ſolid Reaſons wherewith he backs it. Being influenced by theſe, let us ſhew our ſelves true Champions for Chriſt; let us venture our Lives in his Cauſe, and part with our warmeſt Blood for his Sake. Let us not be ſo careful to ſecure our temporal Life, as our everlaſting one; which latter we cannot poſſibly do, unleſs we follow our Maſter even to the Croſs, and die with him, if he requires it of us. Here truly lies the grand Trial of our Religion. Many have been eminent Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, they have been zealous for the Truth, and have ſuffer'd much in its behalf; but when it came to this, they muſt either renounce their Religion or their Lives; they choſe the former; they could not die for Chriſt; after all their goodly Profeſſions, they could not arrive to this. This being ſo hard a Work, I will offer to you thoſe *Means* and *Helps*, in the uſe of which, by the divine Aſſiſtance, you may be effectually enabled to diſcharge this difficult Duty, if ever the Providence of God ſhall exact it of you.

1. THAT you may *take up the Croſs*, ſee that you *deny your ſelves*. This makes way for that, and that can never be done without this. Moſt rationally therefore is *Self-denial* enjoin'd here by Chriſt in the firſt place. He that hath not learnt to part with his Luſts, will not part with his Life. He that cannot ſuppreſs his inordinate Deſires of the Things of this World, will not contentedly leave this for another, eſpecially when it is in a violent way. The Cares of this World, and the Love of Riches and Pleaſures, are thoſe Intanglements which faſten him to this Life, ſo that he is loth to go hence, becauſe his Heart is here, where indeed his only Treaſure is. There is a Neceſſity then of deſpiſing this World, of trampling on this Earth, that we may be willing to take our Flight to Heaven whenſoever our Lord pleaſeth. We muſt in one Inſtance or other daily deny our ſelves, and even as to ſome lawful Things give our ſelves a check and reſtraint. Thus, when on a Day of Triumph, the Emperor *Severus*'s Soldiers put on Crowns of Bayes upon their Heads, one of them, a *Chriſtian*, held his on his Arm, ſaying, *It doth not become a* Chriſtian *to be crown'd in this Life.* This Act of *Self-denial* was a fair Step to taking up the Croſs: This made him more capable of dying for Chriſt; this ſhew'd he was deſirous of no Crown but that of Martyrdom.

2. THAT you may ſuffer Death for Chriſt, *prepare your ſelves* before-hand by your other leſſer Sufferings. A Chriſtian Man is never free from Afflictions, Troubles and Croſſes of one Kind or other in this Life. Theſe (as I ſhew'd before) are his Allotment and Portion in this Vale of Tears. Now, as theſe may and ought to be improv'd both for the trying and increaſing of our Graces, ſo there is this Advantage alſo to be made of them, that they may become uſeful in order to the fitting us for the greateſt of Sufferings, *viz.* the patient ſubmitting to a violent Death. This excellent Skill to improve our common Afflictions to this great Purpoſe, is founded in the Nature of the thing it ſelf; for we ſee, that conſtant Uſe in Things of a lower Degree capacitates Men to perform Things which are of a higher. By accuſtoming themſelves (as *Milo* did) to ſmaller Enterprizes, they grow at length able to undertake greater. You will find this true in moral and religious Actions as well as in thoſe that are natural. If you daily inure your ſelf to Patience, by bearing the ordinary Hardſhips and Troubles of this Life, you will find that Virtue growing ſtronger and ſtronger, and by continual exerciſing of it you will arrive to ſuch a Perfection, that you will not be afraid to ſuffer Martyrdom. We are told, That Maſter *Bilney*, one of our *Engliſh* Martyrs, prepar'd himſelf for the Fire at the Stake, by putting his Finger into the Flame of a Candle. So by ſome leſſer Pain which you endure, you may happily make your ſelves fitter to ſuffer greater, and even to ſacrifice your Lives for the Defence of the Truth, and maintaining the Integrity of your Conſciences.

3. That you may not ſhrink and fall back in that Day when you are call'd to lay down your Lives for Chriſt; conſider *the abſolute Neceſſity* of profeſſing his Name, and owning his Cauſe. Weigh our Saviour's peremptory Words, namely, that *if you confeſs him before Men, he will confeſs you before his Father*: But *if you deny him before Men, he will deny you before his Father*, Mat. x. 32, 33. This lets you know how indiſpenſibly neceſſary in order to Salvation our Confeſſion of Chriſt is. We ſhall certainly be denied, diſown'd, rejected by him, if we deal ſo with him: We ſhall at the laſt Day be doomed to everlaſting Miſery for this very thing, and there is nothing in the World can be pleaded in our Excuſe; for you ſee our Saviour is very plain and poſitive, and his Words are without any reſerve. *Plutarch* tells us of one who was to take a dangerous

Voyage for his Country's Good and Safety (which was then in extreme Peril) and being diſcouraged by ſome from purſuing the Attempt, becauſe it might prove very hazardous, and coſt him his very Life; his Anſwer to them was, [a] There is a Neceſſity of my embarking, and undertaking this Expedition, but there is no Neceſſity of my living: As much as to ſay, to do what was fitting for his Country, was an unqueſtionable Duty incumbent on him, and nothing could excuſe him from the diſcharging of it: And becauſe his *Life* was given him in order to the doing of his Duty, therefore there was reaſon he ſhould venture even that, and be glad that he could thereby do his Country real Service. Let us argue after the ſame manner: If the Honour of God, and the Cauſe of Chriſt require us to hazard our Lives; and if thereby we are certain we ſhall do Service to Chriſtianity, and by not doing it we ſhall diſhonour God, and betray the Cauſe of Chriſt, and prejudice our Religion, and hurt our own Conſciences, then we may conclude there is no need of Living; but on the contrary, there is a Neceſſity of exerciſing our Chriſtian Fortitude, and of imitating the bleſſed Martyrs, who drowned their Affections to the World in their own Blood, and fled from the Embraces of their Friends into the hotteſt Flames.

Fourthly then, SET before you the Pattern of theſe holy Men in all Ages, even from *Abel* to this very Day. Think of the Old Patriarchs and Prophets in the firſt Times of the World, and others who lived afterwards, of whom the holy Scripture teſtifies, that *they were ſtoned*; *they were ſawn aſunder*; *they were ſlain with the Sword* (Heb. xi. 37.) and by divers other ways they were removed out of the World, through the implacable Malice of their Enemies. You read how undauntedly the three Captive *Hebrews* accoſted that *Heathen* Monarch, *We are not careful to anſwer thee: Our God whom we ſerve is able to deliver us, and he will deliver us out of thy hand,* O *King*. You may read in the *Apocryphal* Writings how † *Salomona* and her *ſeven Sons*, and great Numbers of other religious *Jews* were put to horrible Deaths by *Antiochus*. You may read how the braveſt Perſons among them underwent the moſt exquiſite Pains and Torments with an undaunted Courage and Reſolution, and [b] haſtened to Death as to Immortality, as *Philo* ſpeaks. And *Joſephus* relates of the *Eſſens*, "That in the Wars with "the *Romans*, [c] they could not be compell'd by any Puniſhments whatſoever "to ſubmit to the leaſt thing which was againſt their Law. Yea, he tells us, "That they could not be brought by all the Extremity of Pain to uſe any Deprecations againſt their Tortures, or to ſhed any Tears in the midſt of their "Torments: Nay, they were ſeen to ſmile in their moſt painful Sufferings, "and they even derided and play'd upon thoſe who came with their Inſtruments of Cruelty: They reſigned their Souls with chearfulneſs, as thoſe who "knew they ſhould receive them again.

† 2 Macc. 7.

But the *Apoſtles* and *Primitive Saints* of the Chriſtian Church are the moſt eminent Patterns to us of this Sort. *I am ready not to be bound only, but alſo to die at* Jeruſalem *for the Name of the Lord Jeſus*, ſaid St. *Paul*, when his Friends were importunate with him to ſpare himſelf, and to conſult his Safety and Life by not going thither. And he, and all the other Apoſtles, except one, did actually lay down their Lives in the Cauſe of Chriſt. And in the immediately ſucceeding Times, the firſt thing they taught their Children was to confeſs the Lord Jeſus, that as ſoon as they were able they might trudge to Martyrdom. They rejoiced that they ſhould die for Chriſt, and ſometimes they offer'd themſelves to the Slaughter which they knew was deſigned for them. Many thouſands of Men and Women came and laid down their Lives, inſomuch that they glutted the Rage of their Perſecutors; and the Torturers were ſooner wearied than the Tormented. *Polycarp* and *Ignatius* are recorded by [d] *Euſebius* as admirable Examples of Courage and Magnanimity in ſuffering Death for Chriſt: But eſpecially the Speeches and Behaviour of the latter (as they are in his own Epiſtles ſet down) are moſt ſurprizing and aſtoniſhing. That pious Father was [e] afraid that his Friends by their Prayers and Endeavours ſhould hinder him from dying for Chriſt, and thereby greatly injure him; though they ſeemed to love him. When he was brought to *Rome*, he was told, he muſt be dragg'd to the Amphitheatre there, and be expos'd to the Lions, and devour'd by them; he cried out, ſaying, *I will provoke thoſe wild Beaſts to do that which you ſay they will do, that is, to devour me.* When he was *bound*, and led to Martyrdom, he ſtiled his *Chains* [f] *Spiritual Pearls*, the richeſt and choiceſt Ornaments that he could wear. And when he perceiv'd the Time of his Suffering approaching, he utter'd theſe Words, * *Now I begin to be a Diſciple of my Maſter Chriſt*; referring to the Words of my Text, which make the *taking up of the Croſs* a true Badge of a *Diſciple* or *Follower* of Jeſus.

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[a] Πλεῖν ἀνάγκη, ζῆν οὐκ ἀνάγκη.

[b] Εἰς θάνατον ὡς ἐπ' ἀθανασίαν ὁρμῶσι.

[c] Οὐδὲ κολακεῦσαι ποτὲ τοὺς αἰκιζομένους, ἢ δακρῦσαι· μειδιῶντες ἐν ταῖς ἀλγηδόσι, καὶ κατειρωνευόμενοι τῶν τὰς βασάνους προσφερόντων, εὔθυμοι τὰς ψυχὰς ἠφίεσαν ὡς πάλιν κομιούμενοι. De bel. Jud. l. 2. c. 12.

* Epiſt. ad Rom.

AND this was the fixed Perſwaſion of vaſt Numbers more, whoſe particular Demeanor I have not time to ſet down here. This only we can ſay, that it was the great and amazing Wonder in the Primitive Times (and yet it grew ſo common at laſt, that it ceas'd to be a *Wonder*) namely, to ſee Profeſſors of the Chriſtian Religion as zealous of the *Croſs* as others are of a *Crown*; to behold them ruſhing into Torments, and embracing the fatal Stake, and kiſſing their Executioners. The Parents were not only ready to die themſelves, but rejoiced to ſee the Blood of their Children ſhed for the ſake of Chriſt: And they follow'd them with earneſt Exhortatories to continue ſtedfaſt in the Confeſſion of the Faith, and in aſſerting the Truth of the Goſpel. The ſhort is, in thoſe Days the Chriſtians counted it their greateſt Wiſdom and Intereſt to ſave their Souls, and to gain Heaven, whatever they loſt and were depriv'd of. This made them ſeek for Riches in Poverty, Honour in Diſgrace, Liberty in Confinement, Pleaſure in Pain, Eaſe in Torment, and (which is the moſt wonderful of all) Life in Death.

Nor are we deſtitute of *Modern Examples* in this Kind, to hearten and encourage us. There have been thoſe in *foreign Countries* before and ſince the Reformation, who have not been aſham'd or afraid to ſeal the Truth with their Blood. And *at home* likewiſe we have had Chriſtian Heroes in theſe latter Times, who have boldly faced Death in its moſt ghaſtly and affrighting Shapes, when it came attended with Racks and Gibbets, with Fire and Sword, and the cruelleſt Inſtruments of Death that could be found out. Even then their inward Comforts exceeded their outward and bodily Miſeries; their Joy in the Holy Ghoſt ſwallowed up their Senſe of Pain and Torture. Our *Engliſh* Martyr *Baynham*, cried out in the Flames, *I feel no more Pain than if I were in a Bed of Down: it is to me as a Bed of Roſes.* Many of our holy Martyrs were eager of dying, and their only Fear ſometimes was, that they ſhould not come to the Stake. *I am in Priſon till I am in Priſon*, ſaid Mr. *Saunders*; that is, he was uneaſy and impatient till he ſuffer'd with the Profeſſors of the Goſpel, who were in Bonds at that time. One *Wolſey*, a holy Man in Queen *Mary*'s Days was ſo deſirous of Martyrdom, that being in Priſon very ill, he was troubled at nothing more, than that he ſhould die before the Day of Execution came, which he call'd his glad Day. Which occaſion'd Biſhop *Bonner* to ſay to ſome godly Servants of Chriſt, whom he had perſecuted; *I would fain be rid of you, but I think ye take a Delight in burning.* And without doubt they did ſo; for though all the Martyrs in Queen *Mary*'s Days were not alike chearful, bold and reſolute, yet we are aſcertain'd, that moſt of them rejoyc'd and triumph'd in the midſt of the Flames, as if they were (like *Elias*) aſcending to Heaven in a fiery Chariot. Thus by the Example of the holy Martyrs of old and of late, you are excited to *take up the Croſs* and follow Chriſt.

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[d] Eccl. Hiſt. l. 4. c. 14. and l. 3. c. 30.

[e] Φοβοῦμαι τὴν ἀγάπην ὑμῶν μὴ αὐτή με ἀδικήσῃ. Epiſt. ad Roman.

[f] Πνευματικοὺς μαργαρίτας. Epiſt. ad Epheſ.

But fifthly, Of all Examples, that of our bleſſed Saviour himſelf is moſt prevalent. *I lay down my Life for the Sheep*, ſaith he, *John* x. 16. *I have a Baptiſm to be baptized with* (ſaith he in another * place); *and how am I ſtraitened till it be accompliſh'd?* He thought it very long till he ſuffer'd; he was *in pain* (as the *Greek* Word imports) till that time came: And when it came, behold! he took up his Croſs (on which he was to be faſtened and hung) on his wounded Shoulders; and though through weakneſs of Body he could not carry it to Mount *Calvary*, yet he was willing that that ſhould bear him; and accordingly *he became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs.* Let us then, as the Apoſtle exhorts us †, *Look unto Jeſus, who for the Joy that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the Shame*, that is, that ſhameful and ignominious Sort of Death which he underwent (for ſuch Crucifixion was eſteemed to be.) Let us think of Chriſt's dying for us, and then we ſhall earneſtly long to ſuffer Death for him, if in Defence of the Goſpel we be call'd to it: We ſhall rejoice that we have any thing to part with for Chriſt; that we have any thing to offer to him, eſpecially that we can make an Oblation of our Blood to him. His willingneſs to die for us; his ſhedding his meritorious Blood for our ſakes, exacteth this of us. Seeing Chriſt went to Heaven through unſpeakable Sufferings, ſince he climb'd up thither by the Croſs; ſhall we think to come to that Place by treading on Roſes; by indulging our ſelves in ſoftneſs and delicacy? Shall we not rather make our way thither through Streights and Difficulties; through Afflictions and Tribulation, and even through Death it ſelf, if it ſtand in our Paſſage? Shall we not be ready to die for him, who ſo freely died for us, and by his meritorious Death and Paſſion purchas'd eternal Life for us?

* Luk. xii. 50.

† Heb. xii. 2.

Let us continually urge this upon our Minds, that by laying down our Lives for Chriſt, and ſuffering for Righteouſneſs Sake, we are made conformable to *Chriſt* as well as to the *Saints*. He took up his Croſs to teach us what we ſhould do, and to animate and encourage us in the doing of it. Chriſt himſelf was reproached and defamed, he endured Poverty, Hunger, Thirſt, Wearineſs, Faintneſs; he was buffeted and ſcourged, evilly treated and perſecuted, and ſhall we for whoſe Sake he underwent all this and much more, be unwilling to follow his Example? When he was on the Croſs, he taſted of the Gall and Vinegar, and he intended that his Followers ſhould pledge him in the ſame Cup, that they ſhould bear a part in his Sufferings; and therefore, what they undergo is call'd *Chriſt's Sufferings*, becauſe they are in Conformity to him, becauſe we become like him by taking up the Croſs: Wherefore, *taking up the Croſs* and *following Chriſt* are join'd together, in as much as by ſuffering we *follow* and *imitate* Chriſt our bleſſed Maſter the Lord Jeſus; we do but endure what he underwent in his own Perſon, we reſemble him in Suffering. There is no Affliction or Trouble which befalls us, but Chriſt hath undergone the like; this ſhould be matter of great Rejoycing to us. One thought it an Honour to put his Feet into the Stocks where Mr. *Philpot* had ſat. Certainly then we need not be aſhamed, but count it honourable and glorious, to endure the ſame Suffering which our Lord underwent. Was he crown'd with Thorns, and ſhall not we bear the moſt poinant Sufferings? Was he a Man of Sorrow, and acquainted with Grief, and ſhall we ſtartle at the light and momentary Afflictions of this Life? Yea rather, what Toils and Labours ſhould we think too great to undergo for that Jeſus who ſuffer'd ſo much for us. *Moſes*, we read, *choſe to ſuffer Affliction with the People of God*; how much more ſhould we chuſe to ſuffer with Chriſt? It is no wonder that St. *Paul took Pleaſure in Reproaches, in Perſecutions, in Diſtreſſes for Chriſt's Sake* (2 Cor. xii. 10.) he knew that he was made like unto his Maſter by all theſe; this, this alone was ſufficient to reconcile him to them, and make him eſteem them as Pleaſant and Delightful. Wherefore you may obſerve, that St. *Peter* bids the diſtreſſed Chriſtians *rejoice, in as much as they were Partakers of Chriſt's Sufferings*, 1 Pet. iv. 13.

6. I will add this, that it is the *higheſt Honour* you are capable of to die for Chriſt. There is *Honour* in ſuffering Reproach, Poverty, Impriſonment, and

other Evils of that Nature for the Sake of our Lord (as was ſaid before), but in ſuffering Death for him there is the *greateſt* of all. For firſt, God himſelf is glorified by the Death of his Saints, as appears from what is ſaid concerning St. *Peter*'s Death, *John* xxi. 19. And what greater Honour can they have, than to bring Honour and Glory to God? His wonderful Power and Goodneſs are magnified by this Means, for Fleſh and Blood are not able to ſuffer thoſe Things which the cruelty of Perſecutors and Tyrants inflict on the Servants of God. They have no Strength of themſelves to bear theſe Puniſhments and Torments, but they are in an extraordinary manner upheld and aſſiſted by the divine Arm; they feel thoſe Solaces which they were wholly Strangers to before, they are enabled to do that which ſometimes they deſpair'd of ever arriving to. This is the Lord's doing, and therefore it ought to be marvelous in our Eyes: God is to be extoll'd, his great Name is to be exalted and glorified. Look how many *Wounds* I have, ſo many *Mouths* there are to praiſe and magnify God, ſaid *Romanus* a Primitive Martyr. The Sufferings of dying Saints advance the Glory of the divine Majeſty, becauſe thereby Men are excited to ſet forth his Praiſes, to celebrate that Mercy, Pity and Goodneſs, which he gives ſuch remarkable Demonſtrations of, in aſſiſting and comforting of his Servants.

BESIDES, here may be ſeen and admir'd, the ſingular Power and Wiſdom of God, in that he allures his Diſciples by the Croſs, that he makes the exquiſite Sufferings and Death of the holy Martyrs, to be a means to invite Men to embrace the Goſpel, and to own that Religion and Cauſe which they ſuffer for. Thus *Juſtin*, a famous *Platoniſt* tells us himſelf (in his *Apology* to the Senate of *Rome*) that the conſtancy of the Martyrs, their undaunted dying for their Religion, made him of a *Platonick* Philoſopher turn Chriſtian, and afterwards he died for the Defence of Chriſtianity, and purchaſed the Name of *Martyr*. The Inſtances are almoſt innumerable of thoſe who were converted to Chriſtianity, by the couragious Behaviour of Chriſtians, whom they ſaw ſuffer Martyrdom. The ſight of their Blood ſent them to the baptiſmal Waſhing forthwith, they went and joyfully admitted themſelves into the Chriſtian Church, and then ſtrove daily to get other Proſelytes to it. Whence it was truly ſaid, The Blood of the Martyrs is the Seed of the Church; out of the Aſhes of the deceas'd Sufferers, ſprang up new Converts to the Chriſtian Faith.

AND this very Thing which was an Honour to God and Religion, was ſo likewiſe to themſelves. God ſaw who they were that could bear the greateſt Burthen; he made choice of thoſe who were able to ſuffer moſt, which is an unſpeakable Credit and Honour to them. For as the Maſter, who knows the Parts and Learning of his Scholar, doth him an Honour when he brings him forth to undergo an Examination and Trial, ſo it is here; God expoſeth his Diſciples to Danger and Sufferings, to the fiery Trial, even Death itſelf, that they may give Proof to the World of their excellent Abilities, of their firm Patience and Faith, and of their aſſurance of the divine Goodneſs, by which means theſe Chriſtian Graces in them are celebrated, and their Perſons are juſtly honour'd of *Men*, as well as of *God*. Nothing hath more aggrandized their Names in the World than their venturing their Lives, and even laying them down at the Feet of Jeſus. * If it was *Socrates*'s cold Hemlock that made him Great, if his taking off his Cup of Poiſon, his valiant dying for the Truth, hath made his Name famous and venerable: If the Memory of *Curtius* and *Cocles*, and ſuch brave *Romans* that ſpared not their Lives to do their Country good, is renowned and celebrated to this Day, and ſcarcely any gallant Man would decline their Fate to inherit their Glory; much more are the Names of thoſe Worthies who ſerved the Lord Jeſus with the Loſs of their Lives like an Ointment poured forth; they are always mention'd with Honour, and their Perſons are had in everlaſting Remembrance. Their Deaths are *precious* not only in the Sight of the Lord, but of all good and righteous Men.

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* Cicuta Magnum Socratem fecit. *Sen.* Ep 13.

LET this then, and all the other *Conſiderations* aforemention'd, ſtir you up to the Practice of the Duty which our Saviour here enjoins. And thoſe who can conſult St. *Cyprian*'s Works, will find there other excellent Arguments to add unto theſe which I have offered to you; for he living in the Time of very great Perſecution, made it his chief Buſineſs in his Writings to apply himſelf to the Suffering Chriſtians and Martyrs, as alſo to the Revolters in thoſe Days. He did what he could to reclaim the latter; but his main Work, eſpecially in ſeveral of his *Epiſtles*, was to chear and encourage the former; to prevail with the Confeſſors and Captives in Priſon to hold out couragiouſly, and to die Martyrs, as he himſelf ſoon afterwards did. He hath moſt raviſhing Strains of pious Rhetorick to perſwade you to this; and I queſtion not but that they prov'd effectual to that End which he deſigned them for, *i. e.* to prevail with the ſincere Chriſtians to hold faſt their Faith, but to let go their Lives, and even to be prodigal of their Blood in ſo glorious a Cauſe. This hath been alſo *my Task* at preſent; I have endeavour'd to convince you of the *Reaſonableneſs*, *Excellency*, yea *Neceſſity* of this worthy Undertaking, if God ſhall be pleas'd to bring you into ſuch Circumſtances as call for it, that is, when you cannot avoid it without greatly offending God, and hazarding your Salvation. I hope you will then count it an Honour and a great Dignity to die for the crucified Jeſus. I hope you will reſiſt unto Blood, and voluntarily and chearfully part with your Lives, rather than abandon the Truth and deny your Lord, and act contrary to your Holy Religion. To which end let me remind you to ſtock your ſelves with thoſe Graces which will be moſt ſerviceable in Times of Suffering. You know not what will be your Allotment, what Days you are reſerved for, what Difficulties you ſhall undergo. Are you prepared for the worſt of Times? Are you fit to endure Impriſonment or Baniſhment, the Loſs of your Goods and Eſtate, corporal Penalties, and a violent Death? You will not, you cannot be ſtedfaſt in ſuch Circumſtances as theſe, unleſs you be furniſhed with Graces ſuitable to them. Therefore, endeavour before-hand to enrich your Minds with true Principles, and beg for Strength and Ability, and implore that divine Help and Aſſiſtance, by which alone you will be enabled to hold faſt your Religion in a Day of Trial.

Laſtly, To ſhut up all; THOUGH you may never be called to lay down your Lives, yet be ſure that you renounce and forſake all the ſinful Pleaſures of Life; though you make not an Oblation of your Blood, yet ſacrifice your vain Deſires, Appetites and Inclinations. Though you part not with your Lives, yet do not ſpare your Sins, but be very ſevere with them. Thus you are to be *Martyrs*; for, as an ancient *Father* ſaid, *Peace* hath her Martyrs as well as *Perſecution*. You muſt bring your Luſts to the Stake, you muſt mortify and ſlay your Paſſions, ſuppreſs all Malice and Envy, ſubdue Pride and Haughtineſs, conquer Voluptuouſneſs and Avarice, and inordinate Deſires of what kind ſoever; ſacrifice your ſelves, and all that you are and have to Chriſt. This is a ſort of Chriſtian *Martyrdom*, and every Temptation gives us an Opportunity of undergoing this, and behaving our ſelves reſolutely and manfully in it. The Martyrs of Old overcame their *Torments*; we muſt overcome and Conquer our *Sins*. A Chriſtian *dies daily*, in as much as he is daily mortifying and crucifying his Luſts. And know this, that as long as we are aſſaulted by Satan, as long as we are enticed by the World, and as long as our Fleſh ſollicits us, we ſhall not want an occaſion of Martyrdom. We have ſolemnly promiſed to fight, and that manfully under Chriſt's Banner; and every Day we are provoked to draw our Forces into the Field, and engage our ghoſtly Enemies. Though, through the Mercy of God to us at preſent, we are freed from the Hands of bloody Perſecutors, and fight under our Saviour's Banner without loſs of Blood; yet we are conſtantly beſet with Perſecutors, and encircled with many potent Adverſaries. Our Life is a Warfare, and whole Troops of Enemies we are to encounter with; let us reſolve by the help of the Holy Spirit to break through all Difficulties, to make our way thro all Oppoſition, and to get the Victory over all our ſpiritual Foes. In a word, Let us ſtand continually on our Guard; let us watch and pray and keep our ſelves from the Pollutions of Sin. Let us with holy *Job* *, *Hold faſt our Integrity and Righteouſneſs, and not let them go*; let not either *our Hearts*, or our Actions *reproach us ſo long as we live.* Though we have not the honour to be purpled with Martyrdom, let us be white with Innocence and an unſtained Life.

* Job xxvii. 6.

A DISCOURSE OF ZEAL.

GALAT. iv. 18.

But it is good to be zealouſly affected always in a good thing.

WHEN *Titus Veſpaſian* was warring againſt the *Jews*, there was a Faction of Men that gave themſelves the Title of *Zealots*, to maſk their Villainy, and that well-meaning and ignorant People might think that what they did was out of Zeal for God's Glory. And this hath been no uncommon Cheat in the World, and hath done a great deal of Miſchief in it; the fair Pretence of being *zealouſly affected* hath prov'd very prejudicial to Religion. Wherefore we ought to be well inform'd concerning the Nature of true Zeal, that we may not be impos'd upon: And for this Purpoſe I have choſen theſe Words to treat on at this time.

IN them are obſervable, 1. A ſignal *Act*, [*to be zealouſly affected.*] 2. The particular reſtraining it to its *Object*, [*a good thing.*] 3. The *Duration* of it, [*always.*] 4. The *Commendation* of this Act thus inſeparably link'd with its Object, [*It is good.*] I will not tie my ſelf to this Order of the Words, but this I will do; 1. I will ſet before you the *true Nature* of Chriſtian and Godly *Zeal*, and that not only by repreſenting the *inward* and *outward Acts* of it, but by aſſigning the *Properties* and *Qualifications* of it. 2. I will ſhew you how *reaſonable* it is that it ſhould be our Duty. 3. I will offer ſome *practical Deductions* from the whole.

I. AS to the *true Nature* of godly Zeal, in the *general* it is a great Vehemency and Ardency in Religion. It is true that *Zeal* in the New Teſtament is a Word that is ſometimes taken in a bad Senſe, an exceſſive Heat in purſuit of what is evil. But here it is to be underſtood in the beſt Senſe, becauſe *Religion* is that *good Thing* which it is exercis'd about. It is a Fire of the Sanctuary, not a prophane Flame. True Zeal is a Divine Ardour and Fervour in holy Things. It is a ſacred Fire always burning in the Breaſts of godly Men: It is the Warmth and Vigour of holy Perſons in their Proſecution of what is good and virtuous. More *particularly*, this Zeal is either *internal* or *external*.

I WILL ſpeak firſt of that which is *internal*, and hath its Seat in the *Mind* and *Soul*. This is no other than the Vehemency and Fervour of the Affections, or it is the Affections inflamed with Religion. It is a Burning of all the Paſſions, namely, a fervent *Deſire* of God and Goodneſs: It is a holy *Anger* for Sin ſtirr'd up to a great Height; it is an exalted *Love* of whatever is good; it is a perfect *Hatred* and Deteſtation of Vice; it is Vehemency of *Grief*, becauſe God is offended and Religion deſpis'd; it is a ſeraphick *Joy* and *Gladneſs* ſpringing from the Delight which is taken in Holineſs. But tho' *Zeal* be the utmoſt Intention and fervent Acting of all the Affections, yet it is chiefly the Heat and Earneſtneſs of theſe two, namely, *Love* and *Anger*. Firſt, It is an Extaſy of Love: And that Love reſpects both God and Man. He that doth not love God dearly can't be zealous: For Zeal is an inflamed Love of the Beauties and Excellencies of the Divine Nature, of the Perfections of the Deity, of the holy Word and wondrous Works of God, of his Ways and Methods of Grace towards Mankind, and (as the Conſequence of this) it is a paſſionate Longing to exalt God's Glory in the World. Again, he that ardently loves God, will love thoſe who bear his Image. Wherefore an earneſt Love of the Brethren muſt needs be an inſeparable Attendant of godly Zeal, according to that of St. *Peter**, [*Love one another with a pure Heart* fervently]. Thus *Zeal* is the Flame of *Love*. And from this Love flows *Anger* and *Indignation* againſt Sin, and the Doers of it: For he that loves God will ſhew his *Wrath* againſt that which offends and diſpleaſeth him. *Lot* being in *Sodom*, and beholding the filthy Converſation of the Inhabitants of that place, his righteous Soul was *vexed*, 2 *Pet.* ii. 7, 8. *Moſes*, the Man of God, as ſoon as he came nigh to the Camp, and ſaw the Calf and the idolatrous dancing, his *Anger waxed hot*, Ex. xxxii. 19. *Elijah*'s Spirit was extraordinarily moved and provok'd by the Worſhippers of *Baal*, 1 *Kings* 18. *David* was wonderfully incens'd at the Relation of the Man's Carriage who ſpared his own Flock, and robb'd the poor Man of his Ewe-lamb, 2 *Sam.* xii. 5. *Hezekiah* was extremely exaſperated at *Rabſhekah*'s blaſpheming and reviling the God of Heaven. We find our ſelves incens'd and exaſperated to a very high Degree when we ſee Affronts and Injuries offer'd to our Parents, and thoſe whom we love moſt, much more, when our heavenly Father is affronted and injured, our Hearts muſt needs riſe within us, and we cannot but feel them ſtirr'd with Anger and a holy Revenge: For Zeal is an Indignation conceiv'd for the Wrong done to thoſe whom we dearly love. Thus *Zeal* is no other than *Love anger'd:* Or Zeal is a Mixture of Love and Anger: Yea, as was ſaid before, it is a Compound of theſe and other Affections, but theſe two are the main Ingredients, and Love is the Root of all.

* 1 Pet. i. 22.

Secondly, This godly Zeal is not only *inward*, but *outward*. For tho' we have ſo tranſlated the *Greek* Word in the Text, that it ſeems to relate to the *Affections* only, yet the Word is of a more general Import †. *To be zealous* compriſeth the external Acts of Zeal, as well as thoſe that are in the Mind and Soul only. That Man is not throughly zealous, who doth not give outward and viſible Demonſtrations of it, *i. e.* who ſheweth it not both by *Words* and *Actions*.

† ζηλοῦσθαι.

Firſt, The *Chriſtian* Zeal manifeſts it ſelf by Words, as it is ſaid of *Apollos*, that [*being fervent in Spirit, he ſpake and taught diligently the Things of the Lord,*] Acts xviii. 25. and [*he ſpoke boldly in the Synagogue,*] v. 26. So the Apoſtles, tho' they were forbid to ſpeak and teach in the Name of *Jeſus*, cried out, ſaying, [*We cannot but ſpeak the Things which we have ſeen and heard,*] Acts iv. 20. This was their conſtant Behaviour at other Times; they with great Courage and Earneſtneſs preached the Goſpel, notwithſtanding they were commanded Silence. Zeal gives Utterance, and will not ſuffer the Truth to be ſtifled and conceal'd; for Truth is of abſolute Neceſſity, and Error is damnable as well as Vice.

Secondly, Zeal diſplays it ſelf in all religious *Actions* and *Performances*. *Moſes* is an eminent Example of this in the Old Teſtament, and our bleſſed Saviour in the New; the former broke the Golden Calf in Pieces, and ground it to Powder, and made the *Iſraelites* drink down their God, to expreſs his Zeal againſt their Idolatry, the latter whipt the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple, and overthrew the Tables of the Money-changers, and the Seats of them that ſold Doves, to ſhew his Zeal for God's Houſe, and againſt the Prophaners of it. The ſame holy Zeal ſtirs up all pious Souls to Acts of Anger and Deteſtation againſt Sin and Sinners, and ſometimes that which is the Occaſion of the Sin, as in the foreſaid Inſtances.

But to let you ſee that Zeal manifeſts it ſelf in *outward Actions*, and never wants Ways of expreſſing and openly diſplaying it ſelf, I will mention ſome of the chiefeſt Duties required in *Chriſtianity*. The firſt I will name, is *Repentance*. This and Zeal muſt go Hand in Hand, according to that Advice given to the Church of *Laodicea*, *Be zealous and repent*, Rev. iii. 19. And St. *Paul* ſpeaking to the *Corinthians* of the ſeveral Effects and Concomitants of Repentance, demands of them *what Zeal it wrought in them?* 2 Cor. vii. 11. Again, true evangelical Charity is never void of this; wherefore you hear St. *Peter* exhorting the *Chriſtians* thus, Have *fervent Charity* among your ſelves, 1 *Pet.* iv. 8. And hence the *Corinthians* Forwardneſs in Alms-Deeds, in diſtributing and miniſtring to the Saints, is called *Zeal*, 2 *Cor.* ix. 2. Moreover, the Zeal of *Chriſtians* muſt be diſcovered in *Prayer*, that moſt neceſſary Duty of our Religion. This is call'd by St. *Paul labouring* (or ſtriving) *fervently in Prayer*, Col. iv. 12. And another Apoſtle acquaints us that the *fervent Prayer* of the Righteous availeth much, *Jam.* v. 16. In the next Place, *hearing the Word* ought to be with zealous Attention and Vigour, becauſe it is for our Lives, or eternal Welfare is concern'd. Farther, I might ſhew you that an extraordinary Fervour and Zeal muſt accompany the *partaking of the holy Communion.* Here, if ever, our Life and Heat muſt diſplay themſelves. There muſt be Fire on this Altar: Our Hearts muſt be a Burnt-offering. And ſo in all our holy Duties and religious Exerciſes Zeal is indiſpenſibly required, or rather Zeal is the Intention and utmoſt Exertment of them. *Zeal* is when our Graces are in their Zenith or Vertical Point. *Zeal* is *heroick Vertue* in the *Chriſtian Philoſophy:* It is the higheſt Pitch and moſt exalted Degree of every Indowment, Grace, and Duty. This, I hope, gives you a full, tho' ſhort Account of this complicated Grace.

I WILL now (according to what I propos'd) annex the *Properties* of it, which are theſe;

Firſt, THIS Zeal which I have deſcribed, is *real* and *ſincere*, in Oppoſition to *Counterfeit Zeal.* And we may know the Sincerity of it,

1. BY this, namely, If we are moſt offended and incenſed becauſe *God* is diſhonoured and injur'd: For Zeal ſhews it ſelf in the Things that belong to God's Glory. Thus we may know that *Moſes*'s Zeal was ſincere and of the true Kind, becauſe though he was the *meekeſt Man* on Earth in his *own Cauſe*, yet he was extraordinarily ſtirr'd and inflam'd in *God's*, as appears from theſe * Places, where it is recorded that *he was very wroth:* When God was provok'd, he was ſo too, when he ſaw the Divine Majeſty affronted, he could not bear it. Thus Chriſt ſhew'd the Truth of his Zeal for his *Father's Houſe*, fulfilling therein the prophetick Words of the Pſalmiſt, [*The Zeal of thine Houſe hath eaten me up,*] as it was taken Notice of and applied by his Diſciples, *John* ii. 17. This is one way to try the *Sincerity* of your Zeal, *viz.* if you ſignally ſhew it againſt *God's Enemies*, whilſt in the mean time you diſcover a great deal of Clemency to thoſe who are *your own*, and have particularly injured your ſelves.

* Ex. xvi. 20. & xxxii. 19. Num. xvi. 15.

2. THE right genuine Zeal may be known by this; that it ſpends not it ſelf about *leſſer Matters*, and Things that are wholly *indifferent.* Some Mens Zeal runs out into this one main thing, *viz.* to uphold ſome doubtful Opinion, and to defy and deteſt all that are not of their Perſwaſion as to that Particular. One hath well expreſs'd it thus †, [*He that hath no Holineſs nor Charity to be zealous for, will be zealous for his Church, or Sect, or Cuſtoms, or Opinions: and then this Zeal muſt be the Evidence of his Piety.*] Thus it is too frequently, and there are Examples of this falſe Zeal every where. But a wiſe good Man proportions his Zeal according to the Worth and Importance of the Matters he is converſant about: And becauſe indifferent Things are not important and weighty, he knows that they deſerve not his Zeal. All was not maſſy Gold that *Solomon*'s Merchants brought over in their Ships: Apes and Peacocks were part of their Cargo. Thus in our merchandizing for Truth, we meet with ſome ſlight and trifling Things, nice Points, Notions for Imbelliſhment only. And next to theſe, are external Ceremonies and Rites, particular Modes and Circumſtances in religious Worſhip. The peremptory fixing and determining of theſe, or the laying them aſide and diſuſing them, are not worth our ſharp contending, becauſe they are alterable, and have no intrinſick Worth and Vertue in them. But we ought to lay out our Zeal on thoſe Things which are in their own Nature worthy, neceſſary, and indiſpenſible. Here we have Uſe for all the Zeal we can raiſe. Let us therefore be mindful to be zealous in theſe *good Things*, (as the Text enjoins) and let us not miſpend any of our Zeal, and throw it away in Trifles. The Apoſtle bids us

† *Mr.* Baxter, Character of a Sound Chriſtian, *p.* 151.

be angry and ſin not: But thoſe Men certainly ſin in their Anger, who are angry without a juſt Cauſe: And this is the Caſe of thoſe that are exceſſively moved and diſturbed about little and inconſiderable Things: Their Anger is unreaſonable, their Indignation is groundleſs and unjuſt.

3. THIS is another Trial; if your Zeal be accompanied with Love and Charity, you may infer it is ſincere: But if it be ſo fierce and greedy as to devour theſe, and to ſtir you up to be cruel and implacable, then conclude, that your Zeal is not the evangelical Zeal. The Prophets of *Baal* were great Bigots, and mighty Zealots, when *they cried aloud, and cut themſelves after their manner with Knives and Lancets, till the Blood guſhed out upon them*, 1 Kings xviii. 28. Theſe Mens Zeal proved ſavage to *themſelves:* But generally this fiery Quality burns out againſt *others*. This is that ſort of Zeal which St. *James* reproves in thoſe *Chriſtians* whom he wrote to, not only at the latter End of the third Chapter, but at the Beginning of the fourth, *ye kill, and are zealous*, ſaith he: For ſo it is according to the * *Greek*. This *killing Zeal* hath been too frequent in the World. The *Jews* about our Saviour's time were much addicted to it: This made them put to Death the Lord of Life, and perſecute his Apoſtles and Diſciples. Yea, there was a particular Rank of Men among the *Jews* who pretended an extraordinary Zeal, and by vertue of this they would kill any *Chriſtians*. Such were thoſe mentioned in *Acts* xxiii. 12. who *bound themſelves under a Curſe that they would neither eat nor drink till they had kill'd Paul.* Their Manner was to avenge the Cauſe of God, as they pretended, by diſpatching any Man out of the World. Killing and aſſaſſinating for Religion was their profeſs'd Principle and Practice. This Zeal made them afterwards devour and deſtroy one another, and yet ſtill they bragg'd of the Title of *Zealots*. St. *Paul*, according to the Account which he gives of himſelf in *Phil.*iii. 6. had been guilty of this perſecuting Zeal: *Concerning Zeal, perſecuting the Church.* And this very Zeal was the Fault of the *Chriſtians* about four Ages after this. They that had been perſecuted by the *Roman* Emperors, began to perſecute one another: And the diſmal Effects of it are to be read in *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory*. And ever ſince, this perſecuting Zeal hath raged in the *Chriſtian* Church, and the Miſchief that it hath done, as it is moſt deplorable, ſo it is unutterable. I hope I need not take Pains to perſwade ſober Perſons that this furious and bloody Zeal is not the genuine Spirit of Chriſt's Followers, and that Fire and Fagot are not the Marks of the *Chriſtian* Zeal. Nothing is more evident than this, that true Zeal and Cruelty are inconſiſtent, eſpecially that Cruelty which extends to the Soul as well as the Body. I obſerve it is the Fault generally of all Parties, in their hot Diſputes, to call for Fire from Heaven upon their Adverſaries, yea, to ſentence them to everlaſting Flames. But I muſt tell theſe Men, they ought not to damn others to Hell-fire becauſe they do not ſee them ſo hot as themſelves. And beſides I muſt let them know this, that when Zeal is hot and Charity cold, it argues a very bad Temper, ſuch as is never found in any true *Chriſtian*.

4. SOMETIMES Gain and Profit are the only Spring of Mens Zeal, and then you may conclude it to be falſe and counterfeit, and not the true religious Zeal. Thus ſome of the *Epheſian* Worſhippers cried up the Goddeſs *Diana* with a great deal of Clamour and Concernedneſs, becauſe ſhe proved a profitable Deity to them, and the making of her Shrines brought them in a conſtant Revenue. But let us be ſatisfied in this, that thoſe who make Gain their Godlineſs are no true Zealots.

5. WHEN Zeal proceeds from Pride and Ambition, there is Reaſon to believe that it is not ſincere. *Jehu*'s Zeal was of this ſort, which he ſufficiently diſcovered when he call'd to People to come and ſee his Zeal for the Lord of Hoſts. This Fire was blown up by the Breath of Applauſe. They were the Sons of *Zebedee* that call'd for Fire, the very ſame (you may obſerve) who afterwards being vainly conceited and proud, deſired to ſit at *Chriſt*'s Right Hand and Left. Thus by falſe Principles and wrong Ends which ſome are acted by, you may gather of what Nature their Zeal is. But ours muſt not be ſuch, it muſt not be feigned and hypocritical, but ſincere and cordial; not that the Flame is ever ſo pure that it ſends up no Smoke at all: But this is it we are to look after, that we purge our Zeal with all the Care we can, and ſeparate it from wilful Defects which ſavour of Hypocriſy.

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* Φθονεῖτε καὶ ζηλοῦτε. Jam. iv. 2.

Secondly, THIS is another Property of Zeal, that it be accompanied with, and guided by Knowledge, in oppoſition to blind Zeal. St. *Paul* bears Record of the *Jews*, that *they had a Zeal of God, but not according to Knowledge*, Rom. x. 2. And of himſelf he ſaith, that he had formerly been *exceedingly Zealous of the Traditions of his Fathers*, Gal. i. 14. which were a Medley of Ignorance and Superſtition. But he tells us in another Place how Pernicious that Zeal proved to him, and what vile Enormities it excited him to. His Zeal, becauſe it was Blind, made him run Headlong into the moſt wicked Practices; and when he Perſecuted the Saints, he thought he did God Service. The Perſwaſion that he did well, made him the more Hardy in doing ill. But true Zeal is built on Knowledge. This Heat doth not want Light, but is conducted by Judgment and Wiſdom. We muſt underſtand the Things we are zealous for: for if we be very forward and zealous for that which we are Ignorant of, we may, it is true, do ſome good by Chance, but it is an Hundred to one but that we do a great deal of Evil. Remember the qualifying Object in the Text, Zeal muſt be in a good Thing, in Oppoſition to ungodly and wicked Zeal, which is employ'd in a wrong Cauſe. But we cannot diſcern this, if we nouriſh Blindneſs and Ignorance.

Thirdly, THERE ought to be this Property of our Zeal, that it be according to a Rule, and that it keep within its due Limits, in Oppoſition to irregular and lawleſs Zeal. It is true, we read that * *Phineas*, a Prieſt, turned Magiſtrate and Executioner: His Javelin ſtruck two luſtful Sinners through. So † *Elijah* ſlew the Prophets of *Baal*. But this was done by an extraordinary Spirit. We cannot act thus, for we have no Commiſſion to do ſo. Vengeance belongs to God, and to the Magiſtrate, and not to us. If we ſhould, now under the Goſpel, act after that manner, it were a Tranſgreſſing of our Rule, and a direct Violation of the Law of God. We are forbid to go beyond our Bounds: We are to abide in the Callings and Stations which God hath placed us in. Zeal muſt exert itſelf; but then it muſt be in our particular Spheres: As a Soldier muſt Fight and behave himſelf Valiantly, but not out of his Place and Station, not againſt the Orders of his General. I believe, indeed, that if the Zeal of good Men ſhould burn out too Fiercely in ſome of their Enterprizes for God and Religion, he will be ſo merciful as to overlook the Redundancy and Pleonaſm of their Affections for him, and will accept the main and ſubſtantial Tendencies of their Hearts. Yet we are concerned to act according to the Rules of Goſpel-Prudence, and to do nothing unbecoming our Religion, and to take Care that all Things are in ſuch Method and Order, as the Word of God requires. *Uzzah* ſtay'd the Ark, *Uzziah* burnt Incenſe, both meddled in that which belonged not to them; therefore the one was puniſhed with Leproſy, the other with Death. Whether we be in a publick Capacity, or are only private Chriſtians, we muſt act ſuitably to our Condition; we muſt behave ourſelves according to that: Zeal muſt have its certain Limits and Boundaries. This Fire muſt be kept on the Hearth, in its due Place. We ought to act in Religion by certain Rules and Meaſures, for it is a regular and well-guided Zeal that God accepts.

* Num. xxv.
† 1 Kings xviii. 40.

Fourthly, I will add this as another Property, it muſt be Peaceable and Well-temper'd, Sedate and Diſcreet, in oppoſition to turbulent and raſh Zeal. This latter kind of Zeal is mentioned in the New Teſtament, though under another Name in our Engliſh Tranſlation. It is rendered *Emulation*, as in *Gal.* v. 20. where it is reckoned amongſt the Works of the Fleſh. And it is alſo Tranſlated *Envying*, as in *Jam.* iii. 14, 16. and in ‡ other Places, where it is joined with *ſtrife, debate, diviſions, variance.* This carnal Zeal is an immoderate Heat, an exorbitant Commotion of the Mind, an Exceſs and Tranſport, whereby Men diſorder both themſelves and others. Between this Zeal and the other, there is as much Difference as between the quick and fierce Lightnings which are obſerved ſometimes in the Skies, and the Sun's mild, yet active Flame. Falſe Zeal is full of Noiſe and Clamour, and violent Motion. They who are acted by it think that it is of the Nature of ſome Rivers, which are never ſo uſeful as when they Overflow. Theſe Perſons affect Extremities, and imagine Exceſs and Violence to be the moſt excellent Things in Religion. Becauſe the Apoſtle bids us be *fervent* in Spirit, *Seething* or *Boyling*, as the ** *Greek* Word ſignifies; therefore they are not ſatisfied till their Zeal *Boyls over.* But they ſhould call this to Mind, that Chriſtian

‡ 1 Cor. iii. 3. 2 Cor. xii. 20.
** ζέοντες. Rom. xii. 11.

tian Zeal is a natural and kindly Heat, not a burning Fever or Calenture. The Mind or Soul of Man with all its Functions and Faculties, is in Scripture often called the *Heart*, that being thought, of old, to be the chief Place of its Reſidence. But we may learn, by the by, from this Denomination, that the Mind of Man ought to reſemble his *Heart*, from whence it borrows its Name. Now the Motion of this in healthful Perſons is even and placid, and propagates the like Pulſe into all the ſeveral Arteries which overſpread the Body. All its Stops and Intervals are equal and harmonious, as if Nature kept Time in theſe Organs of the Body. And therefore it is related, I remember, as a Prodigy (and well it might) by a * foreign Phyſician, that he met with a Perſon in whom the Motion of that Part was ſo intenſe and furious, that the Strokes of it were heard by the ſtanders by. Sure I am, that the Soul of Man (which in ſacred Writ is ſtiled the *Heart*) is prodigiouſly diſtemper'd when its Motions and Operations become immoderate and rampant. This high Pulſe argues no leſs than an Inflammation of the Mind, than a feveriſh Diſtemper of the Soul. This loud Noiſe and Exceſs of Motion in the Heart is the Reſult of too great a Heat and Rarefaction there. But the Soul (if it be haile and in a good Temper) beats evenly and moderately: it hath no Paroxyſms of inordinate Paſſion; for theſe argue indiſcreet, raſh, and unadviſed, Zeal.

* Bartholin.

Laſtly, THE Text affords another Character of this Zeal: it muſt be conſtant and perſevering. We are to be *zealouſly affected always*. This holy Fire muſt *ever* be burning on the Altar. This is, according to the Apoſtle's Expreſſion, *inſtantly* (or intenſly) *ſerving God Day and Night*, Acts xxvi. 7. As no adverſe Accidents and calamitous Circumſtances, ſo no Allurements and Smiles of the World are able to make the truly Zealous Perſon alter the Tenour of his Life. He hath ſet himſelf to a juſt Pitch, and there he continues. Falſe Zeal ſpends itſelf too faſt, and like ſome Meteor is ſeen to Blaze only a ſhort Time, and then to vaniſh. But that Zeal which is true and genuine, like the Sun ſhineth more and more unto a perfect Day, and is a never-failing Source of Light and Heat.

II. Having finiſhed the Firſt general Part of my Diſcourſe, wherein I have diſplayed the *true Nature* of chriſtian Zeal, I am now in the next Place (but more briefly) to ſhew you how *Reaſonable* it is to put in practice this Grace, or rather this Complication of Graces and Vertues. The Reaſonableneſs of this is contained in thoſe Words in the Front of the Text, *It is good*. It is Good to be Zealouſly affected, always in a good Thing. *Firſt*, It is Good in Reſpect of *God*; *Secondly*, In Reſpect of *Ourſelves*; *Thirdly*, In Reſpect of *Others*.

1. I ſay it is Good in reſpect of *God*, and that if you conſider him, either as he is in his own Nature, or as he is to us. *Firſt*, In himſelf, and in his own Nature he is a *Spirit*, and therefore our Service to him muſt be ſpiritual, lively, and zealous. When 'tis ſaid in *Pſal.* civ. 4. *He maketh his Angels Spirits*, there is ſignified to us the Vigour and Agility of thoſe celeſtial Creatures: And we of this lower World, who are Spirits (as well as Bodies) of an inferiour Degree, muſt imitate them according to our Meaſure; we muſt act with Flame and Ardour, for we as well as they worſhip and ſerve the infinite and eternal Spirit. But will you offer dead Services to the living God? Will you offer a Body without a Soul? For ſuch is our Service and Worſhip, if it be devoid of Zeal and Fervency. *Secondly*, If you conſider God as he is to *us*, every ways good and gracious, continually loading us with his Benefits, and laying Obligations on us by all ways imaginable, we are engaged on this Account to be zealous. We muſt do our Homage and Service to God, as to our great King and Lord in the higheſt Strain, and with the greateſt Intention. We can't be too earneſt in our Addreſſes to him, and in our Concernedneſs for his Glory and Honour. We cannot be too laviſh in our Layings out for God. It was *David*'s generous Reſolve, *not to offer unto the Lord his God of that which coſt him nothing*, 2 Sam. xxiv. 24. There is an Inſtance of a lower kind not unworthy the mentioning, I mean *Alexander*, but long before he had the Title of *Great*, even when he was a Child he was very liberal (and by his gripple Tutor thought profuſe and prodigal) to the Gods he worſhipped. He uſed to fill both his little Hands with

coſtly Perfumes, and throw them on the Altar in the Time of Sacrificing. Let us, who have the Happineſs to ſerve the true God, perſwade our ſelves, that a pious Generoſity becomes us, and that we ought to ſhew the Largeneſs of our Hearts in the Liberality of our Offerings to our bountiful Benefactor. When we conſider that we are hourly receiving from him, and that he beſtows on us what we expend in his Service, we ought to be joyful that we can ſerve him at any Rate. And when we remember that he deſerves our moſt coſtly and chargeable Offerings, yea, and infinitely more, it is impoſſible but we ſhould be provoked to ſerve him to the utmoſt.

2. ZEAL is moſt reaſonable in reſpect of *our ſelves*, and that, firſt, becauſe it is *neceſſary*, in order to our Happineſs. Neither Grace nor Glory are attained otherwiſe, as our Saviour aſſures us, telling us that *the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth Violence, and the Violent take it by Force*, Mat. xi. 12. And he bids us *ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs*. That Word *πρῶτον*, which we render [firſt] may ſignify (as it doth in ſome other Places) not only Priority of Time, but the Intenſeneſs of the Action. We muſt ſeek the Kingdom of God, not only *before* all other Things, but *above* them, *i.e.* with a higher Degree of Affection, and with more vigorous Endeavours. This is a grand Truth and experimented by all the Sons of Virtue and Piety, that unleſs they act vigorouſly and zealouſly, they can effect but little or nothing in Religion. Nay, they muſt follow hard after it, and preſs towards it with the greateſt Eagerneſs, otherwiſe they will find themſelves going back again, they will ſoon cool and decay, grow flat and dull, and never afterwards be in a Capacity to recover themſelves.

And Secondly, ZEAL is not only neceſſary but advantageous. The Benefits of it are very numerous; it ſhall ſuffice to mention ſome of them only. Zeal takes up our Thoughts, and employs our Minds wholly, and therefore is beneficial on this account, that it frees us from worldly Cares and Sollicitudes. It ſuffers us not to be anxious about earthly Things, becauſe it fixes our Hearts on heavenly ones: It cauſes us to ſet our Affections on Things above, and conſequently we are not troubled with thoſe below. Again, Zeal makes us contented and chearful: When we are ſpirited with this excellent Quality, we are able to ſerve God with ineffable Joy and Gladneſs. This likewiſe produceth Fortitude and Courage: If we be zealous, we ſhall be valiant for the Truth, we ſhall not fear the greateſt Oppoſition, but undauntedly make our Way through all Difficulties and Diſaſters. Zeal will enable us to ſuffer any Thing for a good Cauſe. Let me add, that Zeal renders all things in Religion eaſy. There are ſome Things ſo ſublime in every Virtue, that it is hard to attain to them. But Zeal facilitates all; this makes the Way of Religion plain and ſmooth, and helps us to run, and not faint. This is as Wind to the Sails, as Bellows to the Fire, and as an Edge to the Sword. This hath a moſt powerful Influence on all our Duties; this promotes and invigorates all our Virtues and Graces. *Laſtly*, Steadineſs is begot by Zeal, this crowns us with Conſtancy and Perſeverance. Theſe are the unſpeakable *Advantages* which accrue to us by being *zealouſly affected*.

3. NOT only in reſpect of *God* and *our ſelves*, but in regard of our *Brethren* alſo, this is our Duty and Concern. For Zeal is the beſt Promoter of Religion in others, according to that of the Apoſtle, *Your Zeal hath provoked many.* 2 Cor. ix. 2. No wonder that there are ſo few Converts, that Religion gains no more Ground in the World, ſince there is ſo little Zeal. Thoſe that make Profeſſion of Godlineſs ſhew not the Vigour of it in their Lives, they are generally as cold and unconcerned in the Way of Virtue, as thoſe who have not taſted of the ſpiritual Gift, nor felt the ſaving Power of Chriſtianity on their Hearts. Wherefore muſter up all your Forces, and by your Zeal and Earneſtneſs ſhew your ſelves to be Chriſtians indeed: And hereby you will daily gain Proſelytes, your Zeal will be profitable to your Brethren: For they will entertain a good Opinion of that Spirit of Chriſtianity which they ſee is ſo warm and vigorous, and they may at length be brought to embrace it. Thus you ſee the *Reaſonableneſs* of this Doctrine which I have propounded to you. My

IIId. AND laſt Task muſt be to *apply* the foregoing Doctrine, which I will do in theſe two Particulars, namely, by way of *Reproof* and of *Exhortation*.

Firſt, THIS reproves all *Lukewarmneſs*, *Careleſneſs*, and *Indefferency* in Religion. Theſe indeed are the general Blemiſhes of the Times wherein we live, and therefore the Reproof is the more ſeaſonable. It was Mr. *Brightman*'s Opinion, that *England* was particularly repreſented by *Laodicea* in the *Revelation*. Thus far unqueſtionably he was in the right, that the *Laodicean* Temper prevails in *England*. Never were there more lukewarm, indifferent, and unconcern'd Perſons than there are here. How is the Spirit of Devotion almoſt extinct? How cold are Perſons in their Addreſſes to God? What formal Prayers are put up to Heaven? They ſpeak as if they were afraid God ſhould hear them, yea, they can hardly hear themſelves. And as they are thus cold and drouzy when they ſpeak to God, ſo they continue in the ſame dull Temper when God by his Miniſters ſpeaks to them. They hear Sermons as *Eutychus* did, they fall aſleep. When they approach to the Lord's Table to partake there of that tremendous Sacrament, how formal and ſuperficial are they? And in the diſcharging of all their Duties, and the exerting of all their Graces, what a Coldneſs and Numbneſs ſeize them? Eſpecially it may be taken Notice of, that their Love and Charity are even frozen. And if *this*, which is the Spring and Root of all Virtues, be defective, it is no wonder that there is ſuch a general Decay of Religion and Holineſs.

WHEREVER we caſt our Eyes, what an Indifferency do we behold in the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity? They have neither Zeal to reform themſelves, nor others. All Ranks of Men are faulty here. How remiſs and negligent are Magiſtrates? They are cold and chill even in their Furs and Scarlet. How indifferent are they in puniſhing of Vice, and countenancing of Virtue? Mere *Gallio's*, they *care for none of theſe Things*. Miniſters of the Goſpel, who have need of Zeal, that they may *cry aloud, and ſpare not, and lift up their Voice like a Trumpet*, that they may even alarm and fright Men out of their Sins; theſe who ſhould have *Elias*'s Spirit, that they may boldly appear againſt Vice, and that in the great ones; theſe whoſe Tongues ſhould be touch'd with a Coal from the Altar, that they may even fire Men out of their Sins; theſe, alas, are too often found deficient in this Matter. Some are ſilent inſtead of crying, and others flatter great Men inſtead of checking their Vices. How ſlack and faint are many in their Reproofs? How cold and liveleſs in their Admonitions and Exhortations? How moveleſs and unconcerned do they ſtand before the People? And behold! the People learn *that* of them, and nothing elſe: They grow cold by Sympathy. Thus the generality of Men every where are Strangers to Zeal and Chriſtian Fervour. Have we not occaſion to cry out, What is become of the antient Zeal which fired the Hearts of the primitive Chriſtians, and was as hot as the Flames which ſome of them were tormented in? Where is fled that noble Spirit which actuated thoſe excellent Saints of old? How benumned and unactive are the Chriſtians of this Age? What a frigid Zone do we live in now? How perfunctory are we in all our religious Duties and Services? O thou Chriſtian Zeal, whither art thou baniſhed?

BUT from Complaints and Reproofs I paſs to *Exhortation*, which is the next Thing I deſigned. Be exhorted all of you that have any Senſe of Religion and Virtue (of what Rank or Station ſoever you are) to give Proofs to the World of your Chriſtian Zeal. *Be fervent in Spirit, ſerving the Lord*, as the Apoſtle enjoins, *Rom.* xii. 11. Eagerly purſue Holineſs, even when you meet with the greateſt Diſcouragements and Difficulties. The more Impediments and Obſtacles lie in your Way, ſee that you break through them with the greater Reſolution and Courage. The more indifferent or wicked other Men are, the more vigorous and zealous ought you to be. Indeed, true Zeal is often raiſed and increaſed by Oppoſition: This religious Heat grows greater by an Antiperiſtaſis, that is, by being environed by Cold, by meeting with that which oppoſes and reſiſtes it. You muſt be the warmer becauſe others are ſo chill. The more others withſtand you, the higher let your Zeal riſe. The Winds and Storms ſhould but increaſe your Flames.

NOW to back my Exhortation, I will offer theſe ſerious Conſiderations to you.

1. It will not be improper for ſome, yea, moſt of you, to reflect on your former Indifferency and Coldneſs: And let that Conſideration move you to be very zealous for the future. The Apoſtles ſlept when Chriſt was in his Agony, and going towards his bloody Trial; and they ran away at his Paſſion and Death. But you may obſerve that afterwards they ſhewed themſelves the more couragious, they boldly preached Chriſt, they were not aſhamed of their crucified Maſter, they joyfully underwent all Sufferings for his Sake, and they manfully laid down their Lives for him. Thus Zeal is neceſſary as well as proper after Coldneſs and Remiſneſs. On this Account many of you are obliged to be very fervent and zealous. When you look back on your paſt Lives, and ſee how careleſly you have behaved yourſelves, you will be put in mind to act more concernedly and vigorouſly for the Time to come. Think and ſay to yourſelves thus, We have ſhamefully acted hitherto, or rather indeed our Life hath been void of Action, we have ſat ſtill in the Poſture of the Sluggard, with our Hands in our Boſoms, we have done nothing for God, for the Church, for our Brethren, or for our own Souls: And therefore now is the Time for Action, and we muſt be very buſy and vigorous.

It is high Time to mend our Pace, to be quick and active in Religion, to run the Ways of God's Commandments, to ſhew ourſelves very forward and zealous in the enſuing Part of our Lives. Or,

2. It may be ſome of you have been Zealots in the worſt Senſe, that is, exceeding eager and hot againſt Religion and the Ways of Holineſs. The Thoughts of this ſhould make you for the future zealouſly affected in that which is good. *Paul* had been a Zealot, a perſecuting Zealot: This made him more forward in his Chriſtian Zeal afterwards, when the holy Spirit convinced him of the Evil of his Ways: Then the fierce Perſecutor became a warm Preacher, then you hear him cry, * *Follow after Charity*, † *follow Holineſs*, ‡ *follow that which is good.* The § *Greek* Word which he here uſes all along, is the ſame whereby his former wicked and bloody Zeal is expreſſed. *Follow* theſe Virtues and Duties, ſaith he, as I heretofore *follollowed*, *perſecuted* the Saints of God, *i. e.* with great Earneſtneſs and Paſſion. Be reſtleſs and unwearied in your Purſuit of Holineſs, as I am, when I look back on my former perſecuting Zeal. I am as zealous now as I was when I was a Perſecutor: And the Conſideration of that falſe Zeal is the Promoter of this true Goſpel-zeal.

3. All of us ought to conſider the End and Deſign of Chriſt's meritorious Undertakings for us. [*He gave himſelf for us*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar People,* zealous *of good Works.*] It behoves us to weigh and conſider this well, that upon Chriſt's redeeming us, doth naturally follow our performing of good Works, and the being zealous in the performing of them: For Chriſt's Zeal for our Salvation, ſhewed by his redeeming us, prompts us to a ready and ſincere Obedience. We pervert the End of our Saviour's manifeſting himſelf in the Fleſh, and of his laying down his Life, and of the whole Work of Redemption if we be not zealous and forward, eager and active in our Religion.

4. Let us weigh well the important Nature of thoſe Things which we are bid to concern ourſelves for. Our Religion is made up of great and weighty Things, the honouring and glorifying of God in the World, our own everlaſting Happineſs and Welfare, the doing Good and being beneficial to our Brethren. How can you be cold and ſlothful in a Buſineſs of ſo great Moment? Is it poſſible to be careleſs and unconcern'd when you have ſuch a Task to perform? Will you not ſhew your Heat and Spirit now? Will you not ſtrive to attain to the higheſt Pitch of Chriſtian Fervour, when you have ſuch an Employment on your Hands? Let this awaken you to a zealous and affectionate Proſecution of theſe Things.

5. There is this Conſideration to urge you to this Duty, that the Neglect of it will prove very dangerous to you: As appears from what was ſaid to the Church of *Laodicea*, Rev. iii. 16. *Becauſe thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will ſpue thee out of my Mouth.* God will nauſeate and abominate thoſe who are cold and indifferent in Religion. This is ſufficient to excite all Lovers of their own Souls to be very warm and zealous.

* 1 Cor. xiv. 1.
† Heb. xii. 14.
‡ 1 Theſ. v. 15.
§ διώκειν.

6. SET before you the Examples of the beſt and chiefeſt Servants of God. As we ſee in *Nature*'s Fabrick the moſt excellent Bodies, as the Sun and Stars, are the moſt reſtleſs and active, ſo it is in the Oeconomy of Grace, the moſt eminent Saints of God have been always moſt earneſt and zealous, continually moving and acting in the Way of Godlineſs. How zealous were *Moſes*, *Phineas*, *Elias*, *David*, *John the Baptiſt*, *Paul*, and other Saints recorded in holy Scripture? Nay, if you paſs to the Times ſoon after the Apoſtles, you will find that the Chriſtians of thoſe Days were of ſingular Zeal: they were ready to all good Works, they were forward and eager in performing their Duty, and they diſcharged it with great Chearfulneſs and Delight. The Writers of thoſe Times relate what wonderful Things they atchieved, what Hardſhips they encountered with, how they ſlighted all Diſcouragements and Oppoſitions, and grappled with all Dangers, and even Death it ſelf. Let this ſhame *us*, who miſerably degenerate from thoſe primitive Examples, who are backward and remiſs in all the Actions and Exerciſes of Religion, who faintly undertake them, and with much Coldneſs and Indifferency perform them. Let us remember that in the Beginning it was not ſo; in thoſe firſt Times of the Goſpel there was another Spirit in Men. Though Chriſtianity did not heat all of them with equal Flames, yet there was a divine and heavenly Fire to be diſcerned in every one of them, which ſtirred them up to act with a marvelous Zeal for God and his Cauſe. See then that *you* warm yourſelves at their ſacred Fires, be *you* inflamed by that Ardour which burnt in their Breaſts.

7thly, and Laſtly, WOULD you be *zealous*, then ſeriouſly ſtudy the *laſt Things.* Think often of *Death*, and that will inſpire you with Zeal. Conſider that you have but a little Time to live, and then you will be excited to live to purpoſe. This is the Incentive to godly Zeal which the royal Preacher makes uſe of; [*Whatſoever*, ſaith he, *thy Hand findeth to do, do it with thy* Might, *for there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wiſdom in the Grave whither thou goeſt.*] Eccl. ix. 10.

AGAIN, think of the *Laſt Judgment*, imagine that thou heareſt the Sound of the Laſt Trumpet, and that thou ſeeſt the impartial Judge before thee. Theſe will awaken and rouze thee, and effectually cauſe thee to reflect on thy paſt Life, and to be very earneſt and concern'd in what thou doeſt for the future.

THINK alſo of *Hell.* The ſerious meditating on thoſe everlaſting Burnings, will cauſe thee to *Fly from the Wrath to come*, and make thee ſet about the Work of Religion and thy Salvation with great Care and Concernedneſs. The Thoughts of thoſe infernal Flames will warm thee ſurely. What is it that you will not do or ſuffer that you may eſcape the Damnation of Hell? In a Word, the Conſideration of thoſe endleſs Torments, and the Care to avoid them, muſt needs make you *zealouſly affected always in a good Thing.*

BUT becauſe I will conſider you as Perſons of Ingenuity and Generoſity, and not ſo much frighted with the dreadful Name of *Hell*, as kindly and ingeniouſly won upon by the Propoſal of the *heavenly Rewards*, I will mention thoſe in the laſt Place. Think then of *Heaven*, and this will give Spirit and Life to all your Actions. Meditate on the Manſions of Glory and Bliſs prepared for righteous Souls, and then thou canſt not but act with great Fervency, and abound in the Work of the Lord. Haſt thou, O bleſſed Jeſus, out of thine infinite Love and Good-will to me, freely from thy own Bounty and Grace, promiſed a Crown of Righteouſneſs in the bleſſed Regions above? Wilt thou for thine own Sake and Merits recompenſe my poor and weak Endeavours of Holineſs (which are never void of Sin and Pollution when they arrive to the greateſt Perfection)? Wilt thou deign, O dear Lord, to reward my ſhort and tranſitory Actions in this Life with a long Eternity of Happineſs in the higheſt Heavens, where I ſhall for ever enjoy the Viſion of thy bleſſed ſelf without any Diſturbance and Interruption to endleſs and numberleſs Ages? Then let this inſpire us with inceſſant Vigour through the whole Courſe of our Lives; let us run and not faint when this glorious Prize is in our Eye; let this always ſo influence upon us and all that we undertake, that we may generouſly and nobly deſpiſe this lower World, and breath after a better, and long to be in our Father's Houſe, the joyful Reſidence of angelick Spirits, the welcome Receptable of glorified Saints, and the Habitation of juſt Men made perfect.

A DISCOURSE OF GROWTH in GRACE.

2 PETER iii. 18.

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

THERE were ſome Moraliſts of Old, who held, That as all Vices, ſo * all Virtues are alike; and that none are greater or leſſer than others; and conſequently one virtuous Man is not more virtuous than another; one temperate, or wiſe, or juſt Perſon, is not more temperate, or wiſe, or juſt than any other. But this was a falſe Notion, and a very great Miſtake, and founded on no real Bottom: yea, it contradicted the plain Experience of Mankind; for it is evident, that Virtue and Goodneſs admit of Increaſe, and good Men are ſeen to make farther Acceſſions to their Endowments and Graces: Which is the very Thing that the Apoſtle here urges, namely, *Growth in Grace*, and *divine Knowledge.* It is not to be doubted that *the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt* is to be taken in this Place (as in ſeveral others) for an experimental and practical Knowledge of him, for chriſtian Religion and true Godlineſs; and ſo is but another Term for *Grace*, which is the foregoing Word. Now the firſt Thing we are to be concerned for is that this Grace and Holineſs be really wrought in us; for without this we are but *Chriſtians* in Name only. But the next thing we are to look after is that we grow and increaſe in Grace, that all our ſpiritual Endowments and Virtues be advanced to higher Degrees. It is not ſufficient to keep and preſerve what we have got, but we are alſo to add new Acquirements to the former. We muſt not ſit down with our preſent Meaſures, but aſpire after greater. *Plus ultra* is the Motto we muſt chooſe, and reſolve to put in practice. We muſt not be contented with the weak and infant State of Chriſtianity, but we ought to arrive to the *Growth* and Vigour of adult Chriſtians. Here I will, 1. convince you of the Reaſonableneſs, yea, the Neceſſity of this. 2. I will inſtruct you how to examine yourſelves, and to know whether you grow in Grace. 3. I will direct you how you may effectually attain to this Growth. 4. and *laſtly*, I will preſs the Duty upon you, by ſome cogent Motives.

* *Virtutes inter ſe pares ſunt.* Sen. Epiſt. 66. *Omnia rectè facta ſunt æqualia.* Cic. l. 4. de fin. Μηδὲν ἀγαθὸν μηθενὸς ἀγαθοῦ μεῖζον ἢ ἔλαττον. Plut. de Com. Notionib.

I. It will appear to be highly *Reaſonable*, yea, *Neceſſary*, that you *grow in grace*, and that both in Reſpect of yourſelves and in Reſpect of God. *Firſt*, in Reſpect of *yourſelves*, and that upon this five-fold Account;

1. Because your preſent Condition which you are now in requireth it. It is true, in the firſt Creation of the World all Creatures and Species of Things were made Perfect. Trees and Plants ſprung up to their Height at the Firſt: Beaſts were as compleat as they were afterwards: ſo alſo Man at his firſt Appearance was in his Maturity. But it is not ſo ſince, either in Nature or Grace. The *Trees* which ſhoot forth yearly were *tender Plants* before they were what you now behold them to be. All Animals, from a weak and imperfect State, proceed to that which is more compleat. And then as for the new Creation or the Work of Grace, that is Weak at firſt, but afterwards, by Degrees, is Accompliſhed, and brought to Perfection. It is worth your Obſerving, that as there are different Ages in the Life of Man, ſo there are likewiſe in Chriſtianity. There is Infancy: Hence you read of *Babes in Chriſt*, 1 Cor. iii. 1. There is Childhood: therefore St. *John* writes to ſome whom he calls *Little Children*, 1 John ii. 13. thoſe that are weak in Grace. There is alſo Youth: Hence the ſame Apoſtle writeth to thoſe whom he ſtiles *Young Men*, *i. e.* ſtrong in Faith, and all other ſpiritual Endowments. There is the State of Manhood, which, according to St. *Paul*, is *coming to a perfect Man, unto the Meaſure of the Stature* (or the Age) *of the Fulneſs of Chriſt*, Eph. iv. 13. *Laſtly*, There is old Age: Hence the Chriſtians of this State are called *Fathers* by St. *John*, 1 Epiſt. *ch.* ii. *v.* 13. Theſe are the diſtinct *Ages* of Chriſtianity; and I will only note this to you, that as of all the Ages in Man's Life, *old Age* is reckoned the worſt: Here it is contrary, for *old Age* is the beſt in the ſpiritual Life of Chriſtians; for here is moſt Strength, moſt Health, moſt Activity, moſt Growth. Chriſtians muſt paſs through theſe ſeveral Ages: At firſt they are ſhiftleſs Babes, then weak Children, then they arrive to Youth, and afterwards to Manhood, and laſt of all they come to a full Age; they are mature and compleat Chriſtians.

Now it is by the ſpiritual *Growth* (which I am to diſcourſe of at this Time) that Chriſtians paſs from one State to the other. If they did not outgrow their Infancy, they could not reach Childhood and Youth; and when they are here, they could not reach Manhood, unleſs the *ſpiritual Growth* were promoted: Nor could they at length arrive to the beſt and higheſt Age of Chriſtianity, if their *Growth* were not yet greater. Nothing is more evident than this, that at firſt our Graces are infirm, by Reaſon of the continual Sallying forth of Luſt in our Natures. And beſides this, the Devil is ever buſy to aſſault us, and we are beſet on every ſide with the Snares and Temptations of the World, ſo that our Graces are often indanger'd by them. Thus our State being imperfect here, and we coming not to a Height at once, it is requiſite that we increaſe our Strength gradually, that is, that we be every Day *Growing*, and that we conſtantly make Acceſſions to our feeble Virtues and Graces.

2. A continual Growth in Grace is very Reaſonable and Neceſſary, becauſe our Duty is ſo Large and Comprehenſive. *The Commandments of God are exceeding Broad*, as the *Pſalmiſt* well obſerves: Religion is a large Task; Chriſtianity eſpecially is a vaſt Work. There are various and diſtinct Offices which we are to be employed in: Some are Private and ſome are Publick: Some reſpect Adverſity, and ſome a proſperous State; Some Duties more immediately are directed towards God, ſome towards ourſelves, and others have relation wholly to our Brethren and Neighbours. There are inward and there are outward Exertments of Graces; and on ſeveral other Accounts I might ſhew how Comprehenſive our Religion is. Now, it is not eaſy, yea, it is impoſſible to do all this at firſt: None can expect that Beginners ſhould be ſkill'd in all theſe Parts of Chriſtianity: Our Advances of Piety muſt needs be Gradual, becauſe there are ſo many Steps and Aſcents in the Ways of Virtue and Godlineſs. The great *Variety* of Duties and Performances makes it neceſſary that our Progreſs be by Degrees. In the very Nature of the Thing itſelf it cannot be otherwiſe; for where there is *very much* to be done, it is not rational to expect that it ſhould all of it be diſpatched on a ſudden. Yea, our Buſineſs in Religion grows every Day upon our

Hands; as our Lives are prolonged, and new Circumſtances and Occaſions are preſented to us, our Work daily increaſeth, and therefore our Strength and our Graces ſhould be augmented proportionably.

3. We cannot ſhew the *Truth of Grace* in us unleſs we daily increaſe; for this is one great Sign of it, and that an inſeparable one. The true Sons of *Sion go from ſtrength to ſtrength*, Pſal. lxxxiv. 7. And accordingly the Son of this Royal Prophet tells us, that *the path of the juſt is as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day*, Prov. iv. 18. Its Luſtre and Splendor is not the ſame at firſt, that it ſhall be afterwards. You may learn from the Apoſtle in *Rom.* i. 17. that our *faith*, which is the chief Part of our Religion, is ever Growing and Improving; *the Righteouſneſs of God is revealed from Faith to Faith.* That is, that Faith which Juſtifieth, which lays hold on the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, is continually *Growing*, and even advancing towards Perfection. When you ſee it do ſo, you may conclude it is True and Genuine: Otherwiſe look upon it as Falſe and Counterfeit. Mark the Dependance of the 2*d* and 3*d* Verſes of the 2*d* Chapter of the firſt Epiſtle of St. *Peter*, *As new-born babes deſire the ſincere milk of the word, that ye may* grow *thereby: if ſo be ye have* taſted *that the Lord is gracious.* Whence it is reaſonable to infer, that they who have *truly Taſted* of God's Goodneſs, cannot be ſatisfied till they have the compleat Fruition of it, which is to be had only by *Growing* and *Increaſing* in all Grace. Where there is a true Senſe of Virtue and Holineſs, you ſhall ever ſee that the Perſons who are Poſſeſſors of it, ſtrive, by all means, to make conſiderable Additions to thoſe excellent Accompliſhments.

But on the contrary, it is a Sign of Inſincerity and Unſoundneſs, to ſit down and reſt ſatisfied with a mean degree of Holineſs. He was never Good indeed, ſaith St. *Bernard*, who endeavoureth not to be better. It may be preſumed, that that Man's Graces are Dead, which do not increaſe, as 'tis obſerved of Plants, that they die generally, if they do not Grow. This is ſo acknowledged a Truth, that it paſſed into an Adage among the *Hebrews*, * He that doth not add to his Virtues, loſes that which he hath. If you go not forward, it is to be concluded that you go backward: for if the true and living Grace of the Spirit inhabit in you, it will exert itſelf more and more every Day; it will ſpread itſelf after a wonderful Manner, and nothing can ſtop its Progreſs. Wherefore if you do not augment your Stock, it is a Sign you impair it, yea, you will be in great Hazard of wholly loſing it. You ſee then the Accountableneſs of this Duty, you are obliged to grow in Grace, that you may evidence to yourſelves the *Truth* and *Sincerity* of it; for it is certain your Graces are not true, if you are not deſirous to increaſe them.

* דלא מוסיפ וסיפ *qui non addit conſumit.*

4. Growth in Grace is neceſſary in order to Joy and Comfort. From comparing thoſe two Places, *Mat.* viii. 26. and *Mark* iv. 40. in the former of which, Chriſt ſaith, *Why are ye fearful? why are ye caſt down and diſheartned? O ye of little faith!* and in the latter, *Why are ye ſo fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?* We may infer that *little Faith* is *no Faith*, in point of Comfort: Whereas a great Meaſure is exceeding Comfortable and Cheering, and expels all Fear and Sorrow. And thus it is, as to all other Graces of the Holy Spirit; the more they are increaſed, the more Joy and Satisfaction they bring, eſpecially in time of great Calamity and Suffering, in a Day of Sickneſs and bodily Pain; and moſt of all, at the Approaches of Death. A great Portion of Grace is never ſo comfortable and refreſhing to a godly Perſon as at his departing out of this World. Then, then it is moſt available, becauſe at ſuch a Time there is the greateſt Occaſion of exerting it.

But as Growth and Increaſe in Grace are requiſite in Reſpect of *ourſelves*, ſo, *Secondly*, in Reſpect of *God*, and that upon this four-fold Account;

1. Because Growth in Grace is anſwerable to God's Expectation from us. To this purpoſe, obſerve how God expoſtulates with the *Jews*, who were the Vineyard which his own Right-Hand had Planted, *What could have been done more to my Vineyard that I have not done in it? wherefore when I looked that it ſhould bring forth grapes* (*i. e.* good generous Grapes) *it brought forth wild grapes?* Iſa. v. 4. God expects great returns after the great Coſt and Charges (as we may ſo ſpeak) he hath been at. He looks that the Fruit ſhould be proportionable to the Husbandry. The *Talents* (as we read in the Parable) were given to

Traffick with, and to be Improved: and this Improvement muſt be according to the Stock which God beſtowed. What great Reaſon then have we to grow in all Grace and Holineſs, *He* being wanting in nothing that may be ſerviceable to this End? And how inexcuſable then muſt we needs be, if we add not daily to our Graces, if we grow not ſtronger in Faith and all other ſaving Gifts of the Holy Spirit?

2. THIS is anſwerable to Chriſt's Deſign, as you read in *John* xv. 5. *I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, bringeth forth* much *fruit.* And before, in the 2*d v. Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth* more *fruit.* It is intended by the evangelical Diſpenſation, that there ſhould be a conſiderable Increaſe of Gifts and Graces, above what there was before under other Oeconomies of Religion. Our Saviour declares, *that he came that we might have life*, i. e. Grace and all Bleſſings here, and eternal Happineſs hereafter, and *that we might have them more abundantly*, John x. 10. in a larger Meaſure and higher Degree than ever before. Wherefore you fruſtrate Chriſt's Deſign, if you neglect this which I am now urging you to.

3. THIS is anſwerable to the *Means* appointed by God and Chriſt, as *Praying*, the *Word Read* and *Preached*, the *Bleſſed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, the *Gifts and Graces of others*, *Holy Conference*, *Meditation*, and the like. All theſe are Ways and Methods of building you up in your moſt Holy Faith, and of increaſing and improving all other Graces. Particularly the Apoſtle teſtifies concerning the Holy Scriptures, that they were given *that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furniſhed to every good work*, 2 Tim. iii. 15. It is obſervable, that moſt of St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles, and thoſe of the other Apoſtles, were writ and deſign'd on purpoſe to *ſtrengthen* and *confirm* thoſe Chriſtians that they were writ to, and to encourage them to attain to greater and higher Accompliſhments in Religion. By theſe the Spirit of Grace doth uſually firſt work on the Minds of true Converts, bringing them to a Knowledge of the Truth, and a Senſe of Religion: and theſe alſo are afterwards made uſe of in order to the increaſing and compleating of Grace.

4*thly*, and *laſtly*, BY our Growth in Grace God is moſt ſignally Glorified; according to that of our Bleſſed Saviour, *Herein is my father glorified, that ye bear* much *fruit*, John xv. 8. And the Apoſtle would have the *Philippians filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt unto the glory and praiſe of God*, Phil. i. 11. If God's Glory then be precious in your Eyes, you cannot but be ſenſible of the Reaſonableneſs of this Duty; you muſt not ſtand ſtill and reſt in the loweſt Foundations of Religion, but you muſt riſe higher, you muſt increaſe and improve the Talents which you are intruſted with, and (as the Apoſtle ſaith) *go on unto perfection*, Heb. vi. 1. for hereby you have the Honour to bring Glory unto the God of Heaven in a moſt ſignal manner. Thus much for the firſt Thing I undertook, *viz.* to repreſent to you the *Reaſonableneſs*, yea, even the *Neceſſity* of making Proficiency in Grace and Holineſs. Now I proceed to the

IId. GENERAL Head, wherein I am to inſtruct you how you may *examine yourſelves* as to this weighty Matter, how you may ſo try and ſearch yourſelves, that you may know you are of the Number of thoſe Perſons who really *grow in Grace.* The *Greek* Moraliſt hath an excellent Treatiſe on this Subject, *viz.* * How a Man may perceive and know that he hath made Proficiency in Virtue? If this Perſon thought it a worthy Task, ſhall not *we* much more, we who are commanded in the Text to *grow in Grace?* Shall we not think it worth our Time and Labour to enquire whether we really do ſo or no? Take then theſe following *Signs* of Growth in Grace to examine yourſelves by.

1. HE that truly grows in Grace hath a greater Senſe of his Defects and Failings than ever he had before: *Firſt*, A greater Senſe of the Shallowneſs of his Underſtanding. *Secondly*, Of the Sinfulneſs of his Life. In the firſt place, he daily grows more apprehenſive of the *Defect of his Knowledge*, he makes greater Diſcoveries of his Darkneſs and Folly. Thoſe that firſt refuſed the Title of *wiſe Men*, and inſtead of that aſſumed the modeſter Name of *Philoſophers*, *i. e.* Lovers of Wiſdom, did thereby confeſs a Deficiency in Knowledge, and yet at the ſame time gave a Proof of their increaſing it above what others had done, who

* Πῶς ἂν τις ἄισθοιτο ἑαυτοῦ προκόπτοντος ἐπ' ἀρετῇ· Plut.

who arrogated a greater Knowledge to themſelves. Yea, *Socrates* was more plain, and made this downright Profeſſion, that this one thing only he knew, that he knew nothing: But yet this Man was reputed the *wiſeſt* of all the philoſophick Tribe, and was pronounc'd ſo by the Oracle. Thus likewiſe in ſpiritual and divine Knowledge it is a great Sign of Proficiency to underſtand that whatever Progreſs we have made, our Underſtandings are ſhallow, our Notions are imperfect, and we are quite ignorant of many Things: *We know* but *in part*, and *we prophecy in part*; and this is like to be our Portion till we come to the true Land of Viſion, the place of clear and undiſturb'd Light. But thoſe who are the greateſt Strangers to this place, and have made the leaſt Proficiency in Virtue and all the Qualities which muſt fit them for Heaven, diſcern not the Defects of their Knowledge.

Again, If we grow in Grace, we ſhall have every Day a greater *Sight and Senſe of our Sins*. It may look like a Paradox, but is a very unqueſtionable Truth, that the more Grace we have, the more Sin we ſee and feel in ourſelves. The greater Progreſs we make in the way of Righteouſneſs, the more clearly will our Miſcarriages be diſcovered to us, and we ſhall find the Burden of Sin daily heavier and heavier. For now *by reaſon of Uſe*, or Habit, *we have our Senſes exerciſed to diſcern both Good and Evil*, Heb. v. 14. To diſcern theſe in that Manner which we never did before, to diſcern them ſo as to be deeply affected with them. We may know the Growth of Grace in us, by obſerving and taking Notice of our ſinful Motions and Inclinations more than ever. The great Conſciouſneſs of our Imperfections and Failings is a Token of our ſpiritual Improvement.

2. Profound *Humility* is an undeniable Mark of a Man that increaſeth with the Increaſe of God. Ask yourſelves then, whether you be of the Number of the humble *Chriſtians*? Have you laid aſide Self-conceit and Arrogance, high and preſumptuous Thoughts of your own Worth and Excellency? Are you meek and lowly in Spirit? Do you debaſe yourſelves like a little Child? Are you willing and ready to ſubmit to *Chriſt*'s Teaching? Do you ſit at the Feet of this infallible Doctor and liſten to his heavenly Lectures, and entirely receive them, not offering to diſpute the Truth or Goodneſs of what comes from his Mouth? Have you arrived to this Temper? Then you are certainly great Proficients. This is *growing downwards*, at the Root, and is an infallible Sign of *Chriſtian* Proficiency.

3. If your *Deſires of Grace* increaſe, it is an Argument that your Graces themſelves do ſo. The Sharpneſs of the Appetite is ſome Indication of bodily Growth and Nouriſhment. So is it in hungering and thirſting after Righteouſneſs: We may infer thence, that we ſpiritually thrive and grow. By this then try yourſelves: Enquire whether you earneſtly breathe after God and Holineſs, whether your Souls pant after God as the heated Hart doth after the Water-brooks. Ask yourſelves whether your moſt ardent and eager Deſires be after Grace, and after greater Degrees of it.

If you experience theſe fervent Longings and Pantings, you may conclude that the Graces of the holy Spirit *grow* in you.

4. The true Growth of a *Chriſtian* is *proportionable* and *uniform*; by which I mean, that he is one who grows in all his Parts. The *new Man* is not monſtrous in its Accretion. Examine yourſelves then by this, *viz.* Whether you have a Regard to the whole Will of God? Whether all Duties and Performances of Religion be alike acceptable to you? Whether your Eye be impartially ſet on all the Commandments of God? Whether you take care to avoid one Sin as well as another, and the leaſt as well as the greateſt? Are you as averſe to ſecret and inviſible Vices, ſuch as Envy and Malice, as to thoſe that are open and notorious? Tho' you ſuffer no chargeable Sins, as Gluttony, Prodigality, Exceſs in Apparel, yet do you not indulge thoſe which coſt you nothing? A growing *Chriſtian* hath an equal Reſpect to all Duties: Every Grace hath its due Exertment in his Life. He doth not wantonly chooſe what Virtue he will practice, and what he will lay aſide: He makes no Difference of the Divine Laws as to his obeying of them.

But when Men are ſeen to grow only in one Virtue, to be tall as to ſome Graces, but Dwarfs as to others, this cannot be reckoned as a Sign of a *genuine Growth*.

5. You may know your Growth in Grace by the *Eaſineſs* you find in *Religion*. You will certainly perform all Duties with Facility and Dexterity: You will *run*

the Ways of God's Commandments, without Wearineſs. You ſee in the natural Growth of Bodies, that *Agility* and *Vigour* are moſt commonly proportionable to the *Growth:* So is it in the ſpiritual Growth of the Soul: Livelineſs and Activity are its conſtant Attendants. The more we increaſe in Holineſs, the more chearfully and vigorouſly do we engage in all the Parts of it.

Here then you are to try yourſelves: Are the Ways of Wiſdom *Ways of Pleaſantneſs to you?* Or do they not ſeem rough and uneaſy to you? Do you walk in them with Chearfulneſs and Gladneſs? Do you take Delight and Satisfaction in doing what is enjoined you? Are you lively and active in the diſcharging of your Duty towards God and Man? In a Word, is *Chriſt's Yoke*, that is, a holy Life, *eaſy* to you? Do you bear it with Alacrity and Rejoicing? Then you may aſſure yourſelves of your Proficiency in Grace. Yea,

6. There will be *Uneaſineſs* and *Pain* as long as you are hinder'd from religious Exerciſes and holy Duties. All Avocations and Diverſions from theſe will be very irkſome and troubleſome to you, as they were to holy *David*, whoſe great Grief and Trouble by reaſon of his Abſence from the Houſe of God are recorded in the forty ſecond Pſalm, and in others.

Enquire then of yourſelves, whether you find a Diſturbance and Diſorder in you when you are detain'd from the Performance of your Duty? Are you unquiet and reſtleſs ſo long as you are impeded in the Acts of Religion? Is it the Grief and Pain of your Souls that you are at any time hinder'd from Converſe with God, and from making your Addreſſes to him, and from having gracious Returns from him? If it be thus, queſtion not your *Growth*.

Laſtly, If your Converſation be in Heaven, if your Thoughts, Deſires, and Longings tend thither, if you ardently wiſh to depart and to be with *Chriſt*, this is a good Evidence of your growing in Grace and Goodneſs. For this Heavenly-mindedneſs ſhews that you are fitted for that bleſſed Place, which you cannot be without a *great Meaſure* of Holineſs, and making very conſiderable Progreſs in Religion and Piety. Examine yourſelves then, whether you frequently converſe with Heaven whilſt you are on Earth? Are your Eyes lifted up towards thoſe glorious Manſions above? Do you entertain yourſelves with the Thoughts of thoſe celeſtial Pleaſures which are at God's Right-Hand for evermore? Do you daily ſolace yourſelves with the Contemplation of thoſe unutterable Joys which you ſhall be poſſeſs'd of in that future State of Bliſs? Are you raviſh'd with the ſerious Meditation on that Crown of Righteouſneſs which is laid up for pious Souls? Do the heavenly Delights darken and ſlur all carnal Pleaſures which offer themſelves to you? Do you really prefer and chooſe thoſe before theſe? Are you ſo affected with the tranſcendent Pleaſures of the *New Jeruſalem*, that you long to go thither, that you may have the actual Enjoyment of them? If this be your Caſe, I pronounce without any Scruple, that you *grow* and *thrive* in Grace.

These are the ſeveral *Signs* of that *ſpiritual* and *divine Growth* which my Text ſpeaks of. It concerns you to *examine* whether you find theſe in you. If you do, you have great Reaſon to bleſs God, and to magnify his Name for this unſpeakable Mercy. But on the contrary, if you experience none of theſe Things in yourſelves, you have Cauſe to be exceedingly troubled: For (as hath been already ſuggeſted) it is greatly to be feared that you go back, if you can't make it appear that you go forward.

But yet here great *Caution* is to be uſed, leſt you be miſtaken in this important Point which I have been treating of. You muſt therefore remember theſe four Things:

1. When I ſay that every true Believer grows in Grace, it is not meant that he doth ſo every Moment or every Hour of his Life. As it is in the natural Body, there may be ſome Diſeaſe or Malady that will retard the Growth for a time, ſo 'tis in the ſpiritual State of the Soul, its Increaſe and Strength may be obſtructed by its contracting ſome evil Habit, which is the Diſeaſe and Sickneſs of the Mind. So that we muſt not confine the Growth of Chriſtian Men to every individual and leſſer Portion of their Lives.

2. All Chriſtians have not *a like Growth:* For (as the Apoſtle acquaints us) *To every one is given Grace according to the Meaſure of the Gift of Chriſt*, Eph. iv. 7. Now 'tis certain, that Chriſt gives greater Meaſures of Grace to ſome than he doth to others: Wherefore we muſt not conclude, that we have no Increaſe of

Grace, becauſe we ſee a greater and fuller one in ſome of our Brethren. We muſt know, that both they and we receive according to the Meaſure and Proportion which Chriſt allotteth them and us. This muſt be remembered, otherwiſe we ſhall not be able to form right Conceptions concerning ourſelves and our State: But we ſhall be apt to condemn ourſelves when there is no Ground for it; we ſhall be grieved and perplexed without Cauſe, and at laſt plunge our ſelves into Deſpair. Therefore it is requiſite that we proceed warily here, and that we compare not ourſelves altogether with others, for the Growth of all Chriſtians is not the ſame: But there is a very great Inequality among them. For tho' I had ſaid before, that their Growth is *uniform*, and in all Parts, yet it is not *alike* in all.

3. ALL Graces grow not alike in the *ſame Perſon*. As Travellers tells us of the *Perſian-Tree*, that at the ſame time it buds, bloſſoms, and bears Fruit: So fares it with the ſpiritual Plants in the Garden of the Church; ſome Graces in them are compleat and perfect, and at the ſame time others are imperfect, and but in their bloſſom. Wherefore you ought to be apprehenſive of this, and not raſhly to judge yourſelves. It is not fair and juſt to make your Cenſure concerning your State from ſome particular Inclinations or Actions that you obſerve in yourſelves. A Man may grow *more* in one Grace than in another, which he looking chiefly upon, thinks he grows not at all. This is judging wrongfully.

4. REMEMBER this alſo, that Grace may *grow inſenſibly* ſometimes: it may increaſe, but you may *not perceive* it. And ſo a Man, inſtead of knowing that he makes Proficiency in Grace, may ſeem to himſelf to decay; which proceeds from ſuch Cauſes as theſe, firſt, his Humility and mean Thoughts of himſelf oftentimes renders him uncapable of judging aright in his own Cauſe: Again, his vehement Deſire and earneſt Longing for Grace make him unſenſible of his Growth. Thus was it with the great Apoſtle, *Phil.* iii. 13, 14. his Eye was more ſteadily fixed on what he *had not*, and deſired to have, than what *he had.* He ſtrove for great Meaſures of Grace, and that made him overſee what he had attained to. In brief, a good Man doth not grow as much as he deſires, therefore he thinks he grows not at all. Moreover, ſometimes his Inſenſibleneſs proceeds from this, that he hath fallen into ſome groſs Sin, whereupon God deſervedly forſakes him: Then his Eyes are ſhut; he is not able to ſee thoſe Signs before-mentioned. Therefore in this Caſe he muſt be content to ſit in the dark awhile: He having brought it upon himſelf, ought to bear it patiently: And *he muſt remember from whence he is fallen, and repent, and do his firſt Works.* And by degrees the Cloud will be diſperſed, and the thick Darkneſs will vaniſh, and he will be able to take Notice at leaſt of ſome one Sign of that Growth which hath for a time been hid from his Sight. But if a Man find *none* of theſe *Signs* in him at any time, then indeed he hath Cauſe to ſit down in Sorrow, and to deſire God to affect his Heart with his wretched Condition. Yet he muſt not ſit in Deſpair, but riſe up, and ſeriouſly inquire how he may for the future attain to this *ſpiritual Growth*, although at preſent he be deſtitute of it. And that is the next and

IIId. TASK which I have ſet my ſelf, *viz.* to direct you to the Uſe of thoſe *Means* whereby you may moſt effectually grow in Virtue and Godlineſs.

1. That you may attain to the Increaſe of Grace, fall down before God, and make your humble Addreſſes to him by *ardent Prayer*. You know what the Apoſtle ſaith, *I have planted, Apollos watered: but God gave the Increaſe. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the Increaſe*, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7. Of him therefore you muſt crave this choice Bleſſing, from his Hands you muſt derive it by earneſt Supplications at the Throne of Grace. Thus the ſame Apoſtle *prayed* in Behalf of the *Philippians*, *That their Love might abound yet* more and more *in Knowledge and in all Judgment, and that they might be* filled *with the Fruits of Righteouſneſs*, Phil. i. 9, 10. Pray for yourſelves in the like Manner, that you may abound more and more in all Grace, that you may be filled with all the Fruits of Righteouſneſs and Godlineſs. Our Saviour tells us, that we are not able to * *add one Cubit to our Stature:* which he primarily meant without Doubt of the bodily Growth: But it is much more true of the ſpiritual, we

* Mat. vi. 27.

we cannot of ourſelves make the leaſt Additions to it. It is by the Divine Influence alone of the Holy Spirit that we have Power to grow and increaſe in Grace: Wherefore we are concern'd to beg that with all Earneſtneſs and Importunity. We are wholly unable to reſiſt *Satan*, to repel his fiery Darts, and to withſtand the various Temptations wherewith he aſſaults us: Whence it is neceſſary, that we urge that Petition of the Diſciples*, *Lord, increaſe our Faith*, which is the Root of all other divine Graces: Lord, increaſe this and all the reſt in us, for from thee alone we acknowledge our ſpiritual Growth is derived.

*Luke xvii. 5.

2. That you may effectually increaſe in Godlineſs and Righteouſneſs, frequently converſe with *the Word of God* contain'd in the holy Scriptures, and preach'd by the Miniſters of the Goſpel. Food is neceſſary in order to Growth: Know then that God's Word is the Food of your Souls, without which it is impoſſible that your ſpiritual Growth ſhould be advanced. Therefore, according to St. *Peter*'s Admonition, *as new-born Babes deſire the ſincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby*, 1 Pet. ii. 2. Conſtantly take in this ſacred Nouriſhment, feed daily on this holy Repaſt of pious Souls. And that theſe ſpiritual Viands may become more ſerviceable to your Nouriſhment and Growth, take them dreſſed and prepared by the Preachers of the Goſpel, thoſe whoſe Office it is rightly to divide and carve this Food, and to diſpenſe it to the Family of God. Delight to hear the ſacred Writings explain'd by them, to have the Myſteries of that Book unfolded, its ſacred Truths diſplayed, its Commands and Injunctions powerfully urged, its Promiſes fitly applied, and a holy Life made the Inference from all. If thus you delight in the divine Law, your Growth will ſoon appear to the World.

3. THAT ſacred and ſolemn Inſtitution of *Chriſt*, *the Lord's Supper*, is another excellent Advancement of our Graces. As the other Sacrament is to admit us into *Chriſt*'s Flock, and to initiate us into Religion, ſo this was deſigned to lead us on farther, to turn our *Water* into *Wine*, to enable us to make great Additions to our Strength, and to make us Proficients in all Virtue. Do not neglect then to come to the Table of the Lord, there to eat the Bread of Life, to feed on the Body and Blood of *Chriſt*, for among other Advantages which will ariſe from doing ſo, you will find that this is not the leaſt, *viz.* that your ſpiritual Growth is marvellouſly increaſed thereby.

4. TO ſpeak more largely, you will certainly make great Progreſs in Religion by an uninterrupted Exerciſe of your Graces, and by a conſtant Performing of your Duties. This therefore you muſt be very careful of, that you let not Months and Weeks, no not Days, paſs without an actual Exerting of ſome Grace, and a ſolemn Performance of ſome religious Duty. *To him that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have more abundantly*, i. e. to him who exerciſeth, and makes Uſe of his Graces, there ſhall be great Acceſſions made: For the very uſing of them doth in its own Nature contribute to their Growth. Graces are compared to *Garments* in *Col.* iii. 11, 12. but *theſe* are the worſe for conſtant wearing; it is not ſo with *thoſe*, for they are much better'd, they grow and increaſe by *uſing*, and in this indeed they reſemble *Garments*, which grow larger and wider by wearing. Our Virtues by daily Exerciſe are enlarged and amplified: The more we act them, the more they are augmented.

5. LET me tender this Advice to you, Think not highly of yourſelves by reaſon of any Progreſs you have made: For this may ſtop you, or make you go backward, but it will never promote your farther proceeding. Therefore let the Apoſtle's Example be always in your Eyes, *Forgetting thoſe Things*, ſaith he, *which are behind, and reaching forth to thoſe Things which are before, I preſs towards the Mark*, Phil. iii. 13, 14. He minded not his paſt Acquirements, in regard of thoſe great Things which were yet to be done by him: Yea, he thought not he had done any thing ſo long as any thing remain'd undone. Go you, and do ſo likewiſe: Reſt not in your paſt Enterpriſes, or your preſent Attainments, but reach and *preſs forward*. Nothing hath more hinder'd the Growth of Grace in many *Chriſtians*, than their fond Perſwaſion that they have done enough. Hereupon they ſit ſtill, grow idle and unconcern'd, and loſe even that which they ſeem'd to have had. But be not you thus ſelf-conceited, content not yourſelves with what you have done already, but ſee what is before you, obſerve what great Things are ſtill re-

quired of you: Be not ſatisfied till you make farther Progreſs: And by this Means you will at laſt proſperouſly effect it.

6. Duly *call yourſelves to an Account,* frequently *examine your ſpiritual State.* Rifle your Hearts and Lives, and ſee whether your Sins decay, whether your Graces be more lively, and your Converſations more exact than formerly. Are you thankfully ſenſible of our Redemption by our Lord and only Saviour, and do you with an unſhaken Confidence rely on the all-ſufficient Undertakings of this bleſſed Redeemer? Are your Thoughts, Words, and Actions, regulated by his holy Laws, and are you inflamed with Love to him, and to all good and holy Men for his Sake? Are you Maſters of thoſe Graces which are moſt difficult, namely, Self-denial, Humility, Meekneſs, Patience, and *Chriſtian* Fortitude? Have you attain'd to be religious in an adverſe as well as a proſperous State? Is it your firm Purpoſe of Heart and Endeavour of your Life, to pleaſe God in all Things? Do you prefer his Glory, your own Conſcience, and your Duty, before all Conſiderations and Ends whatſoever? Do you ſtrive to arrive to the utmoſt Height and Perfection of it that you are capable of in this Life? Laſtly, Do you check Vice, and promote Holineſs in *others?* Do you endeavour to make your Brethren and Neighbours Partakers of the ſame Grace with you? Thus examine yourſelves, for this is the way to *increaſe* in all holy and virtuous Living. The induſtrions Tradeſman that often looks into his Books, and ſets his Accounts right, is like to thrive. It is more certain that the *Chriſtian* who looks into his Conſcience, and examines the Particulars of his Life, ſhall go on ſucceſsfully in Religion. His Care muſt be to take a Survey of his Debts, *i. e.* of his Sins and Offences againſt the God of Heaven; and of his Receipts and Incomes, *i. e.* the Graces and Virtues which by the divine Help he hath been able to exert. He muſt mark what particular Graces thrive moſt, and what are moſt weak and feeble: He muſt obſerve what particular Sins he is moſt inclinable to, and which of them are moſt check'd and kept under. By this accurate View of his Condition, he will learn how and when he ought to guard himſelf againſt thoſe Sins, and alſo to cheriſh and ſtrengthen thoſe Virtues: The effecting of which will wonderfully advance the *Growth* of theſe latter.

7. Set before you the *Examples* of the eminent Saints and Servants of God. Let their great Proficiency raiſe Bluſhes in your Faces firſt, *i. e.* cauſe you to be aſhamed of your Lives and Practices, yea, and to be aſhamed to ſee how Men generally behave themſelves. They tread the ſame Path, they are lock'd up as it were in a Circle, they change not, they mend not their Motion. A ſort of *Fairies* in Religion theſe are, if I may ſo ſpeak, they dance in the ſame Ring, they go no farther, they make no Improvement. And then alſo let the Example of thoſe Worthies ſtir up in you Deſires and Endeavours of making greater Progreſs, let it excite you to aſpire to that Growth in Virtue which they had attain'd to. When you take Notice of the great Things which they atchieved, you will ſcorn to reſt in mean Undertakings, you will not ſuffer yourſelves to be confined to the common Tedder, you will not brook the common Dimenſions of Virtue, but generally ſally forth unto larger and wider ones. Nay,

8. It will not be amiſs to obſerve *the Practices and Examples of the Wicked.* They ſtand not ſtill, they increaſe in Vice; like Crocodiles they grow as long as they live: Every Day adds to their Hatred of God and Goodneſs, to their Love of Sin and Vice, and to their dextrous Practice of it. They are more and more addicted to the Ways of Wickedneſs, and more eſtranged from thoſe of Godlineſs. Thus the Unrighteous *grow* daily. Shall not good Men then do ſo too? For Shame let not theſe latter dwindle and decreaſe in Virtue, when the former increaſe ſo faſt in a contrary Quality.

Laſtly, Observe how in all *other Things* Men ſtrive who ſhall make the greateſt Proficiency, and let this be one Help to further your Growth in Grace. You will find that *Chriſtians* are compared in the Goſpel to *Merchants, Bankers, Stewards,* who are Perſons that are buſy to *increaſe* their own or others Eſtates. This may teach the Profeſſors of *Chriſtianity* what they are to do, *viz.* to improve what they have. Let them take Notice of the reſtleſs Attempts of worldly Men, ſuch as will be rich, and make it their great Study to inlarge their Revenues; thinking it but *little* that they have, ſo long as there is any thing *more* to be got. Let them obſerve alſo the greedy Inclinations of thoſe who are Lovers of Pleaſure, or ambitious of Honour: The former thirſt after more Delights, and the latter would riſe yet higher in the World. This alſo is the Genius of thoſe who affect Skill in Arts and Sciences: They ſtill cry, give, give: They never ſay they have enough, they are daily adding to their Stock of Learning. And the like may be ſaid of all the other Acquiſitions of the Mind and Body. Let this be made uſe of by you to nobler Purpoſes: Scorn to come behind theſe Men in the Eagerneſs of your Purſuits, reſt not in mean Acquirements, ſtrive for Proficiency in Virtue and Godlineſs, make daily Advancements in Religion and Grace. *As ye have received how you ought to walk, and to pleaſe God, ſo abound more and more,* 1 Theſſ. iv. 1. Add to your Attainments, be they never ſo great. *Let your profiting appear to all Men, increaſe with the Increaſe of God, grow in Grace.* That you may the more effectually do this I will proceed to the

IVth. And laſt Thing I deſigned, *viz.* to preſs this Duty upon you by ſome *cogent Motives.* To this End let me requeſt you to conſult the firſt Chapter of the ſecond Epiſtle of St. *Peter.* You may obſerve there, that the very Entrance or Salutation of the Epiſtle is a Wiſh or Prayer for this ſpiritual Growth, *Grace and Peace be* multiplied *unto you.* St. *Paul* wiſhes *Grace and Peace,* but St. *Peter* the *Increaſe* or *Multiplying* of them. You will find that this Wiſh is founded on God's Goodneſs and Bounty, who *gives us all Things that pertain to Life and Godlineſs:* As alſo on God's *Call,* who *hath called us to Glory and Virtue,* ver. 3. Thus the Apoſtle confirms them in the Hope of the *Increaſe of Grace* in reſpect of God. Next, as to themſelves, he lets them know that they muſt do their Part, *Giving all Diligence* (ſaith he) *add to your Faith Virtue, and to Virtue,* &c. ver. 5. This is the very Exhortation in my Text, *viz.* to *grow and increaſe in Grace,* to add one Virtue and Duty to another. The Apoſtle ſeems to ſpeak here thus, You have embraced the Goſpel, you believe in *Jeſus; Faith* makes you what you are, *Chriſtians;* but let your Faith be accompanied with Virtue, yea, with all Virtues.

To the Foundation add a Superſtructure, to your Faith add (1.) *Virtue, i. e.* Univerſal Righteouſneſs and Juſtice, (2.) *Knowledge, i. e.* Wiſdom and Prudence, a fuller Inſight into the Myſteries of the Things of Heaven, a Knowledge that refers to Practice, a right Underſtanding and Ordering the Means that tend to the End: (3.) *Temperance,* whereby you are to keep yourſelves from being led away by thoſe Enticements and Allurements of Pleaſure which are in the World: (4.) *Patience* or *Fortitude:* Which is well join'd with Temperance, becauſe (as it hath been obſerved by * Moraliſts) theſe two go together. You muſt not only abſtain from all unlawful Pleaſures, but you muſt endure all Hardſhips: You muſt not be deterr'd from doing your Duty by the Difficulties and Sufferings that attend it. Thus the Apoſtle hath ſet down here the four *cardinal Virtues,* as they are commonly called by the Maſters of Ethicks. He adds farther (5.) *Godlineſs,* which is converſant about the divine Worſhip chiefly, but in a larger Senſe extends to all Acts of Piety and Religion which have God for their immediate Object: (6.) *Brotherly Kindneſs,* that Virtue whereby we inwardly love and outwardly ſhew Kindneſs to the Brethren, *i. e.* the Houſhold of Faith, thoſe whom we believe or know to be truly good and holy: (7.) *Charity,* a Love to all Men good or bad, a Love which extends even to our Enemies. Thus the Apoſtle exhorts them to add one Grace and Duty to another, to grow and increaſe in all good Works.

And to back this Exhortation, he adjoins three Incentives or Motives. The firſt is in the 8th Verſe: *If theſe Things be in you, and abound, they make you that you ſhall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the Knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* i.e. If you add Virtue to Faith, if you ſtudy good Works and the Increaſe of them, you will thereby give certain Proof that your Faith in *Chriſt* and your Knowledge of him are not idle and fruitleſs, but operative and efficacious, than which nothing can commend *Chriſtianity* more. In the 10th Verſe there is *another Motive, If ye do theſe Things,* ſaith he, *ye ſhall never fall,* i. e. Increaſe in Grace is a Remedy againſt Apoſtacy. And to this Purpoſe you may obſerve the Connection of my Text with the foregoing Verſe, *Beware leſt ye being led away with the Error of the Wicked, fall from your own Stedfaſtneſs: But grow in Grace.* This latter Advice is offer'd as an Antidote againſt falling away. *Thirdly,* He adds this as another Motive, ver. 11. *So an Entrance ſhall be miniſtred unto you* abundantly *into the everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt,* i. e. an abundant

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* Ἀνέχου καὶ ἀπέχου. Epictet.

Meaſure of Glory, a rich and ample Reward in Heaven attends thoſe that abound in Grace. Be not diſcouraged by the great Labours you are to undergo, think not that you do too much for Good. Here is that which will animate and hearten you, your Happineſs ſhall be increas'd according to the Increaſe of your Holineſs. Therefore as you expect a more maſſy Crown of Glory hereafter, ſtudy to be Proficients in Grace here. Theſe are the excellent *Motives*, the powerful *Perſwaſives* which the Apoſtle uſeth.

MANY others might be added, but I will mention this one only, and it chiefly concerns thoſe of you who have lived a conſiderable time, and have ſpent many Years in the World already. You have had a great deal of Time to employ, and ſtill your Time is not exhauſted: Think how equitable it is that you, of all other Perſons, ſhould *grow in Grace*. As one Year is added to another in your Life, ſo it is meet you ſhould add one Virtue to another in this long Courſe of Time. As you grow in Age, you ſhould think yourſelves concern'd to grow in Goodneſs. The nearer you approach to the Grave, the brighter and more eminent ſhould your Virtues be, as the Sun looks biggeſt when it is near its Setting. But becauſe the Lives of all Men are uncertain, and none of you know when the Period of them will be, you are upon that Account concern'd all of you, whether you be yet in your Youth, or have arrived to a riper Age, to make Haſte, and delay not to add one Grace to another, and to compleat all your Virtues. Therefore, as St. *Paul* ſaith in reference to *Love*, the ſame ſay I in reſpect of that and all *other* Graces, *I beſeech you, Brethren, that ye increaſe more and more*: Or, in the Words of our own Apoſtle, *Grow in Grace and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.*

A
DISCOURSE
OF
PERFECTION.

2 CORINTHIANS xiii. 11.

Finally, brethren, — *be perfect.*

HAVING been Treating of thoſe Things wherein the *utmoſt Height* of Virtue and Godlineſs conſiſts, as *Self-denial*, *Taking up the Croſs*, *Zeal*, *Growth in Grace*, it remains that I ſpeak of *Chriſtian Perfection*, which is the conſummating of all our Virtues and Graces. *This we wiſh, even your Perfection*, ſaith the Apoſtle, in the *9th v.* of this Chapter: and he turns his Wiſhes and Prayers into a direct Command in the Words of my Text; for being now to take his Farewel of the *Corinthians*, he reſolves to cloſe all with ſome great and worthy Precept, and ſuch as ſhould ſurpaſs all that he had ſaid before: Ac-

cordingly he concludes his Epiſtle after this manner, *Brethren, farewell, be perfect.* That we may rightly underſtand what is meant here by *being perfect,* or *what kind of Perfection* it is we may and ought to attain to, I will inſiſt on theſe three Propoſitions: 1. That there is no abſolute and entire Perfection in this Life.
2. That notwithſtanding this, there is a Perfection to be attained to in this Life.
3. All Chriſtians ought to make it their Concern to attain to it.

I. There is no abſolue Perfection in this Life. By *abſolute Perfection,* I mean a State without all Sin: and by *this Life* I mean the preſent Diſpenſation which we are under, as well as the Term of Time allotted us here before we arrive at Heaven. I do not wholly deny that a Creature may be without Sin, yea, I muſt needs grant it, for God created our firſt Parents without Sin, and Angels and Men in Heaven are freed from it. But I ſpeak now of our preſent State and Condition after the Fall, when all Mankind are corrupted. There is no abſolute Perfection to be found in any Perſon whomſoever ſince the Apoſtacy of *Adam:* There is no ſuch Thing as exact and unſinning Obediences, or not offending at all in Word, Thought, or Action. Yea, comparatively ſpeaking, the Bleſſed Angels are not Perfect: Thoſe heavenly and glorified Spirits, if compared with God, are impure, which ſome think to be the Meaning of thoſe Words in *Job* xv. 15. *The heavens* (*i. e.* the Inhabitants of that Place) *are not clean in his ſight. What* then *is Man that he ſhould be clean, and he that is born of a Woman that he ſhould be righteous?* Man is the Subject I am to ſpeak of; and I will make it evident both by *Scripture* and *Reaſon,* that he is not abſolutely perfect, and that he hath not attained to a ſinleſs Purity.

THE Teſtimonies which occur in *Holy Scripture* prove this ſufficiently: Thoſe infallible Writings expreſly deny a ſinleſs Perfection. *There is no Man that ſinneth not,* ſaid *Soloman* at his Bleſſing the People when the Temple was dedicated, 1 *Kings* viii. 46. And again in *Prov.* xx. 9. *Who can ſay I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my ſin?* The Manner of the Speech is obſervable by an affirmative Interrogation: he more ſtrongly denies the Thing; and doth in effect ſay, No Man on Earth can truly affirm, that his Heart is clean, and that he is pure from his Sin. The ſame inſpired Perſon tells us, that *the juſt man falls ſeven times a day,* i. e. he frequently ſins, *Prov.* xxiv. 16. And though he recovers himſelf and riſes again by Repentance, yet this argues his continual ſinning. The ſame holy Penman tells us in *Eccl.* vii. 20. that *there is not a juſt man upon earth, that doeth good and ſinneth not.* The Holy Ghoſt in the New Teſtament bears witneſs to the ſame, as in *Jam.* iii. 2. *In many things we offend all:* and in 1 *John* i. 8. *If we ſay that we have no ſin, we deceive ourſelves, and the truth is not in us.* Theſe and many more expreſs Teſtimonies of Scripture proclaim aloud that there is no abſolute and compleat Perfection in this Life.

BESIDES, *Scripture* atteſteth this Truth by the various *Inſtances* and *Examples* it preſents us with. Of all the moſt eminent Saints, it may be obſerved that their groſs Failings are recorded in holy Writ; and ſometimes they do there openly deny Perfection to be in them, to let us know that the Meaning of *Perfection* is not that it is abſolute. A great Catalogue might be given in to prove this Aſſertion, though it is ſaid in *Gen.* vi. 9. that *Noah* was *perfect,* yet the ſame Sacred Hiſtory acquaints us, that he * *planted a vineyard, and drank of the wine, and was drunken, and he was uncovered within his tent.* This was a high Crime, if you conſider that he was newly come out of the Ark, and had been ſo ſingularly favoured by God in the time of that common Deſtruction, which ſwept away the reſt of the World. *Abraham,* the Father of the faithful, left his Country and Friends, and came into a ſtrange Place, that he might avoid the Temptation of worſhiping ſtrange Gods: Yet this good Man was ſo fearful of his Life, that, to ſave it, he betook himſelf to Equivocating and Lying, and expoſed his Wife to the Danger of being vitiated by a luſtful Prince, in whoſe Territories ſhe was. *Lot,* another very good Man, fell into a very ſcandalous and reproachful Sin; and this he did even in *Zoar,* after his Deliverance from the Flames of *Sodom,* which makes his Crime the more black and foul. *Moſes,* the Man of God, was foil'd in that very Virtue which he was ſo eminent for. This *meek* Man grew ſo extravagantly angry, that God denied him entering into *Canaan* for that one Treſpaſs. *Aaron,* a Servant of the Lord, complied

with

* *Gen.* ix. 21.

with the idolatrous Inclination of the People, and made them a golden Calf. Though *Job* was a *perfect Man*, as you read in *Job* i. 1. yea, and he is pronounced *Perfect* by God himſelf, in the *c.* 2d and *v.* 3d where alſo it is ſaid, *That there was none like him on the earth*, (he was the true *Arabian Phœnix*) yet this was he that curſed the Day of his Birth, and behaved himſelf very diſorderly both towards God and his Friends, which made him freely and ingeniouſly profeſs after this manner, *If I juſtify myſelf, mine own mouth ſhall condemn me; if I ſay I am perfect, it ſhall alſo prove me perverſe*, chap. ix. ver. 20. Of *David* it is ſaid, *his heart was perfect with the Lord his God*, 1 Kings xi. 4. yet he often acknowledgeth and lamenteth the Wickedneſs of his Heart, and his notorious Sins of Murder and Adultery are upon Record *. *Who can underſtand his errors? who knoweth how often he offends? Cleanſe thou me from ſecret ſins*: Such was the Language of this *perfect Man*. *Joſiah*, that good King, was Confederate with *Pharaoh Necho*, though God had expreſly warn'd him to the contrary. *Elijah* and *Jonah*, two eminent Prophets and Saints, were weary of their Lives, and impartially wiſhed for Death. *Jeremiah* (as well as *Job*) curſed the Day of his Birth.

* *Pſal.* xix. 12.

Zachariah was righteous before God, and blameleſs, as the *Evangeliſt* teſtifies; yet you read of his groſs *Unbelief*, which was the Cauſe of his being ſtruck dumb. St. *Peter*, the great prime Apoſtle, was the firſt that denied and abjured his Maſter, and all the Diſciples forſook Chriſt and fled. St. *Paul*, that choſen Veſſel, who calls himſelf *Perfect*, *Phil.* iii. 15. yet frequently ownes his Sinfulneſs and Pollution, eſpecially in *Rom.* vii. where he partly concludes thus, *O wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?* He and *Barnabas*, who had hazarded their Lives for the Name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, diſgraced the Goſpel by their *ſharp Contention* with one another. Many of the Saints, being compell'd by Perſecution, *blaſphemed* Chriſt, *Acts* xxvi. 11. St. *John*, who was the beloved Diſciple, and the Seraphick Apoſtle, who queſtionleſs had attained to greater Heights than others, yet *fell down before the Angel to worſhip him*, Rev. xxii. 8. Whence I gather, that *being in the Spirit*, and having high *Revelations*, doth not make Perſons Infallible and Impeccable.

THUS it is plain from thoſe Texts that ſpeak of the moſt eminent Servants of God, that they were not abſolutely perfect; they were actually guilty of great Sins, and they confeſs as much themſelves. Look into the ſacred Records, peruſe the whole Bible, and you will ſcarcely find one amongſt all the moſt noted Servants of God, who hath not been guilty of very grievous and provoking Miſcarriages. So that the Reſult of what hath been ſaid is this, If we would look for *Perfection*, where are we like to find it but in the moſt eminent and noted Saints mentioned in the Book of God? But it is evident and undeniable, that theſe were ſo far from being perfect and ſinleſs, that they committed ſome of the moſt notorious Sins, which (as you have heard) are particularly ſet down by the inſpir'd Penman of the Old and New Teſtament. Theſe Crimes and Enormities are rigiſter'd in theſe Holy Writings on purpoſe to convince us of the Frailty of their Natures. Theſe are infallible Teſtimonies of the evil and deprav'd Inclinations which they are ſubject to: Theſe are unanſwerable Demonſtrations of their Liableneſs even to the worſt Vices; in brief, theſe are a plain Proof that there is no *abſolute Perfection*.

I might inſtance alſo in *Societies* and *Communities* of Perſons, for the *Scripture* teſtifieth the very ſame of theſe. The beſt Churches have ſinned: God's beloved People, who were his Darlings and Delight, his peculiar and choſen Flock, whom he ſeparated from the reſt of the World, theſe grievouſly and ſcandalouſly tranſgreſſed the divine Laws; they were † *a ſtubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that ſet not their heart aright, and whoſe ſpirit was not ſtedfaſt with God: they kept not his covenant, and refuſed to walk in his law.* The Churches of *Corinth* and *Galatia* are repreſented by St. *Paul* (who was well acquainted with their State) as much corrupted in Doctine and Manners. The *Aſian* Churches ſpoken of in the *Revelation*, had very groſs Crimes laid to their Charge. Thus the Church of Chriſt is ‡ *black, though comely*: and though ſhe be ‖ *fair as the moon* (as the ſame holy Writer ſpeaks) yet like *that* ſhe hath her *Spots* and *Blemiſhes*. Or, if ſhe had been ſaid to be *Fair as the Sun*, it would not have exempted her from *thoſe*, if the Hypotheſis of ſome late Philoſophers be true, That an impure Scum ſometimes over-runs the Face of that great Luminary, and overſhadows its Beauty, and intercepts its more vigorous Influence. The beſt and brighteſt So-

† *Pſal.* lxxviii. 8, 10.

‡ *Cant.* i. 5.

‖ *Cant.* vi. 10.

cieties of Men have their dark Sides, their groſs Failings and Miſdemeanors, which muſt needs be ſo, becauſe we have proved it before of the Inviduals.

And other Writings beſides the Bible acquaint us, that there is no *great Man* but ſome time or other, is an Example of human Frailty. There is ſome *Abatement* in his Eſcutcheon, ſome *Stain*, ſome *Blot* amongſt his moſt illuſtrious Actions. Sometimes the Virtues and Vices of a Perſon, ſeem to be of an equal Poize. Thus Hiſtorians obſerve of *Alcibiades*, a young Nobleman of *Athens*, and one of ſingular Endowments, That his bad Qualities were almoſt as many as his good ones. And *Livy* ſaith of *Hanibal*, That he equall'd his Virtues with vicious Practices. *Alexander the Great* had an eminent Mixture of both; but he ſullied and almoſt defaced all his former heroick Acts by his Extravagancies in the Cloſe of his Life, after his taking of *Babylon*. It is obſerved that the eminenteſt Wits have the greateſt Miſcarriages, as ſome of the beſt Trees have the moſt luxuriant Boughs. And if *Ariſtotle* be in the right, that all ingenious Men are of a melancholy Temper, then the Steams of their Melancholy may prove as hurtful as their Wit and Parts are beneficial. That particular Humour or Temperament which gives a Whet to their Brains, may alſo ſometimes diſturb their Imagination, and ſo be productive of very ill Conceptions. And ſo it is obſerved, that oftentimes Men of great Reaſon have as great Paſſions; for the active Spirits which are ſerviceable to the one, may be as inſtrumental in ſtirring up the other. This ſhews that no Endowment, no Virtue of Man, is perfect and without Defect. Even thoſe that undertake to reprove the Diſorders of others, are ſubject to the ſame themſelves. *Democritus*, that laugh'd at the Folly of the World, afterwards put out his own Eyes, which was as fooliſh an Act, as any he could expoſe and deride. All we can ſay is, Great Virtues are accompanied with great and no common Errors.

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In the next Place I am to make this good by *Reaſon* as well as *Scripture* and *Examples. Firſt*, If you conſider the *depraved Nature* of the beſt Perſons, you will conclude that it cannot be otherwiſe. There can be no abſolute Perfection in this Life, becauſe it is not morally poſſible that the Work of Perfection ſhould not be interrupted and ſpoiled by original Concupiſcence, the Mortification of which will not be compleated in this Life. The Weakneſs of our Underſtandings and Judgments (which is part of our corrupted Nature) contributes hugely towards this, for theſe Faculties being depraved, are eaſily overborne by our corrupt Affections, the Law of our Members warring againſt the Law of our Minds, and bringing us into Captivity to the Law of Sin, which is in our Members, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Rom.* vii. 22. And though we furniſh our Minds with a conſiderable Stock of good and uſeful Notions, and very excellent and choice Principles, yet when we come to make uſe of them, and to reduce them to Practice, we miſerably miſcarry, and they have no powerful Influence upon our Actions. And as for our Reſolutions and Purpoſes, they likewiſe prove ineffectual, yea, even in the Midſts of our Reſolves, we act contraray to them. We are like the Poet who made a Verſe in his very Promiſe never to make one again. We Sin whilſt we are Purpoſing and Praying againſt our Sins: We mix Contradictions with our Devotions, and we run counter to our Deſigns and Actions.

This muſt needs be ſo as long as we carry the fleſhly Nature about us. This and the Spirit ſtruggle in us as *Eſau* and *Jacob* in *Rebecca's* Womb, but the former for the moſt part gets the Victory. We are divided and diſtracted Creatures, we combate with and vanquiſh ourſelves: And how often are we defeated merely becauſe we are careleſs, and attend not to what we do? We are ſurprized, and mere Inadvertency betrays us to many Offences. An * ingenious Perſon mentioning that Rule of the Apoſtle, *He that ſtands let him take heed leſt he fall*, ſaith this upon it, That Rule cannot always be obſerved, becauſe a Man happens ſometimes to fall before it is poſſible for him to take heed. There is ſuch a thing as ſudden Irreption or Surprize; and by reaſon of the Weakneſs of our Nature we are often ſubject to it. Hence it is evident that no Man is able in this Life perfectly to keep the Commandments of God, but daily breaks them in Thought, Word and Deed. There is on this Conſideration an Impoſſibility of Perfection, *i. e.* of obeying all Chriſt's Commands entirely and without failing; our Nature or preſent State will not bear it.

Secondly, This might be made good from the Conſideration of the Nature of the *Covenant of Grace*. Under this (which is a peculiar Diſpenſation, and differs from the *Covenant of Works*) there is not required of us an Obedience that is abſolutely perfect. A compleat exact Conformity to the Law is not the Condition of this gracious Covenant made with Mankind after the Fall of *Adam*: Therefore it is clear, that whilſt Men contend for ſinleſs Obedience, or keeping all the Commandments of God without the leaſt Failure, they ſpeak againſt and do in a manner null the *New Covenant*; for this hath no ſuch Terms annexed to it as Performances void of all Sin. But you will ſay, Cannot a Man keep all the Commandments of God? I anſwer, If keeping all the Commandments of God be meant in the rigid Senſe, and as ſome (whoſe Names I ſhall afterwards mention) do maintain, I declare it is impoſſible to keep all the Commandments of God. But this we may ſafely and truly ſay, that a Man, by the Grace of God, is able to obſerve all his Laws in that Manner and Meaſure which he requireth of us. But God doth not require of us an Obedience free from all Sin whatſoever: He doth not look for abſolute Perfection, ſo that if we fail in any caſe we are to be damn'd without remedy. No, the *Goſpel* teacheth no ſuch thing, but, on the contrary, according to the *Evangelical Covenant*, we are accepted though our Performances be not wholly free from Sin. This is the Nature of the New Covenant; and therefore thoſe who cry up a ſinleſs State of Life, and that this is required under the Goſpel, underſtand neither the Goſpel nor the Covenant. We are not in the Circumſtances which our firſt Parents were in, who by the Tenour of the firſt Covenant were obliged to perfect Obedience: But the Covenant of Grace which we are under ſuppoſes Sin and Imperfection, elſe there were no need of Grace; therefore Chriſt was ſent by God to fulfil the Law, becauſe we cannot do it. Whence it is plain, that *Perfection* is an idle groundleſs Fancy, and againſt the Strain of Chriſtianity.

Thirdly, This Doctrine will appear moſt reaſonable, if you conſider the End and Deſign of *God's conſtituting Repentance* under the Goſpel. This great evangelical Grace is uſeleſs, according to the Notion of *Abſolute Perfection*; for Repentance ſuppoſeth Guilt, but where there is Abſolute Perfection there is no Guilt. I cannot ſee how this Argument can be anſwer'd; for *Innocency* and *Repentance* are two different, yea, contrary Things. He that is Innocent and Sinleſs, needs no Repentance: Wherefore when our State calls for this latter, it is undeniable that we are not of the Number of the former. *Cicero* ſpoke like a *Stoick*, when he ſaid † a wiſe Man repents him of nothing. The *Stoicks Porch* could furniſh you with ſuch wiſe Men, or rather, in a high Bravade, it only boaſted that it could do it. But *Chriſtianity*, which is ſober and conſiderate, promiſeth no ſuch Wiſdom, but acquaints you that it is Part of the Goſpel-Wiſdom to *Repent*. For the very Nature of the Goſpel tells us this, *viz.* that God is indulgent and merciful, and leaves place for Repentance: And this Repentance implieth that there is Folly and Sin in the Life of Man, for nothing is to be repented of but theſe.

So then it is evident from *Scripture* and *Reaſon*, that there is no abſolute Perfection in this Life: Impeccability is not the Allotment of the beſt Saints: The

* *Sir* R. Baker's *Chronicl. p.* 42.

† *Sapientem nullius rei pœnitet.*

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In the next Place I am to make this good by *Reaſon* as well as *Scripture* and *Examples*. *Firſt*, If you conſider the *depraved Nature* of the beſt Perſons, you will conclude that it cannot be otherwiſe. There can be no abſolute Perfection in this Life, becauſe it is not morally poſſible that the Work of Perfection ſhould not be interrupted and ſpoiled by original Concupiſcence, the Mortification of which will not be compleated in this Life. The Weakneſs of our Underſtandings and Judgments (which is part of our corrupted Nature) contributes hugely towards this, for theſe Faculties being depraved, are eaſily overborne by our corrupt Affections, the Law of our Members warring againſt the Law of our Minds, and bringing us into Captivity to the Law of Sin, which is in our Members, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Rom.* vii. 22. And though we furniſh our Minds with a conſiderable Stock of good and uſeful Notions, and very excellent and choice Principles, yet when we come to make uſe of them, and to reduce them to Practice, we miſerably miſcarry, and they have no powerful Influence upon our Actions. And as for our Reſolutions and Purpoſes, they likewiſe prove ineffectual, yea, even in the Midſts of our Reſolves, we act contraray to them. We are like the Poet who made a Verſe in his very Promiſe never to make one again. We Sin whilſt we are Purpoſing and Praying againſt our Sins: We mix Contradictions with our Devotions, and we run counter to our Deſigns and Actions.

THIS muſt needs be ſo as long as we carry the fleſhly Nature about us. This and the Spirit ſtruggle in us as *Eſau* and *Jacob* in *Rebecca's* Womb, but the former for the moſt part gets the Victory. We are divided and diſtracted Creatures, we combate with and vanquiſh ourſelves: And how often are we defeated merely becauſe we are careleſs, and attend not to what we do? We are ſurprized, and mere Inadvertency betrays us to many Offences. An * ingenious Perſon mentioning that Rule of the Apoſtle, *He that ſtands let him take heed leſt he fall*, ſaith this upon it, That Rule cannot always be obſerved, becauſe a Man happens ſometimes to fall before it is poſſible for him to take heed. There is ſuch a thing as ſudden Irreption or Surprize; and by reaſon of the Weakneſs of our Nature we are often ſubject to it. Hence it is evident that no Man is able in this Life perfectly to keep the Commandments of God, but daily breaks them in Thought, Word and Deed. There is on this Conſideration an Impoſſibility of Perfection, *i. e.* of obeying all Chriſt's Commands entirely and without failing; our Nature or preſent State will not bear it.

Secondly, THIS might be made good from the Conſideration of the Nature of the *Covenant of Grace*. Under this (which is a peculiar Diſpenſation, and differs from the *Covenant of Works*) there is not required of us an Obedience that is abſolutely perfect. A compleat exact Conformity to the Law is not the Condition of this gracious Covenant made with Mankind after the Fall of *Adam*: Therefore it is clear, that whilſt Men contend for ſinleſs Obedience, or keeping all the Commandments of God without the leaſt Failure, they ſpeak againſt and do in a manner null the *New Covenant*; for this hath no ſuch Terms annexed to it as Performances void of all Sin. But you will ſay, Cannot a Man keep all the Commandments of God? I anſwer, If keeping all the Commandments of God be meant in the rigid Senſe, and as ſome (whoſe Names I ſhall afterwards mention) do maintain, I declare it is impoſſible to keep all the Commandments of God. But this we may ſafely and truly ſay, that a Man, by the Grace of God, is able to obſerve all his Laws in that Manner and Meaſure which he requireth of us. But God doth not require of us an Obedience free from all Sin whatſoever: He doth not look for abſolute Perfection, ſo that if we fail in any caſe we are to be damn'd without remedy. No, the *Goſpel* teacheth no ſuch thing, but, on the contrary, according to the *Evangelical Covenant*, we are accepted though our Performances be not wholly free from Sin. This is the Nature of the New Covenant; and therefore thoſe who cry up a ſinleſs State of Life, and that this is required under the Goſpel, underſtand neither the Goſpel nor the Covenant. We are not in the Circumſtances which our firſt Parents were in, who by the Tenour of the firſt Covenant were obliged to perfect Obedience: But the Covenant of Grace which we are under ſuppoſes Sin and Imperfection, elſe there were no need of Grace; therefore Chriſt was ſent by God to fulfil the Law, becauſe we cannot do it. Whence it is plain, that *Perfection* is an idle groundleſs Fancy, and againſt the Strain of Chriſtianity.

Thirdly, THIS Doctrine will appear moſt reaſonable, if you conſider the End and Deſign of *God's conſtituting Repentance* under the Goſpel. This great evangelical Grace is uſeleſs, according to the Notion of *Abſolute Perfection*; for Repentance ſuppoſeth Guilt, but where there is Abſolute Perfection there is no Guilt. I cannot ſee how this Argument can be anſwer'd; for *Innocency* and *Repentance* are two different, yea, contrary Things. He that is Innocent and Sinleſs, needs no Repentance: Wherefore when our State calls for this latter, it is undeniable that we are not of the Number of the former. *Cicero* ſpoke like a *Stoick*, when he ſaid † a wiſe Man repents him of nothing. The *Stoicks Porch* could furniſh you with ſuch wiſe Men, or rather, in a high Bravade, it only boaſted that it could do it. But *Chriſtianity*, which is ſober and conſiderate, promiſeth no ſuch Wiſdom, but acquaints you that it is Part of the Goſpel-Wiſdom to *Repent*. For the very Nature of the Goſpel tells us this, *viz.* that God is indulgent and merciful, and leaves place for Repentance: And this Repentance implieth that there is Folly and Sin in the Life of Man, for nothing is to be repented of but theſe.

So then it is evident from *Scripture* and *Reaſon*, that there is no abſolute Perfection in this Life: Impeccability is not the Allotment of the beſt Saints: The

Sir R. Baker's *Chronicl. p.* 42.

† *Sapientem nullius rei pœnitet.*

moſt regenerate Perſons are imperfect in this World. They aim at and tend towards the higheſt and greateſt Improvements, but they cannot ſay they have actually attained them. Even as the magnetick Needle conſtantly looks towards the North-Pole, but yet it ſeldom preciſely points at it.

THIS is a Notion ſo clear, that *Jews* and *Pagans* (without the help of Goſpel-Diſcoveries) own it without any ſcrupling. What ſaith the *Talmud?* There are three Tranſgreſſions from which a Man can be free no Day of his Life, *viz.* evil Thoughts, Wandring or Inattentiveneſs at Prayer, and evil Speaking. It were well if this Number contained all the Tranſgreſſions of a Day, but alas! there are many more. *Philo*, the learned *Jew*, ſpoke rightly *, There are, ſaith he, innumerable Things that defile the Soul, and it is impoſſible to wipe off and waſh them away quite. And excepting the *Stoicks* (who were a ſort of *Perfectioniſts*, for they pretended to be † void of all Paſſion and Vice, to be able to curb all evil Motions, and to be irreprovable in their Morals) who were the proudeſt Sect of all, it was generally acknowledged by all the *gentile Philoſophers*, that Man is no ſinleſs Creature, that he is not wholly free from Vice and Immorality.

THE greater Reproach and Shame it is that *ſome Chriſtians* maintain the contrary. It is thought that the *Gnoſticks* were the firſt Criminals in this caſe. Theſe, though they were Men of bad Lives, pretended to Perfection; in Confutation of whom, ſome think St. *John* uttered thoſe peremptory Words ‡, *If we ſay that we have no ſin, we deceive ourſelves, and the truth is not in us.* And again, ‖ *If we ſay that we have no ſin, we make him a liar* (*i.e.* pretending to be Perfect, and yet living impurely, we give God the Lie, who hath defin'd what is *Sin*, and what is not, and tells us on what Terms we muſt be ſaved) *and his word is not in us*, (*i.e.* we are far from obeying his Commands, even whilſt we pretend ſo much to it. Or thus, God hath declared in his Word what Sin is, and that we are incident to it, and therefore we abandon God's Word when we brag of Perfection.) Againſt this Doctrine likewiſe was that ſort of Hereticks who were called *Cathariſts*, the ſame with the *Novatians*, who boaſted of their angelick Innocence and Purity: And as for thoſe who ſinned after Baptiſm, they held that ſuch were not capable of any Pardon at all, but were in a State of Reprobation.

THE *Donatiſts* alſo were great Aſſerters of a perfect State on Earth, and ſo were the *Pelagians*, for they meant no other when they ſaid § the Commands of God are not impoſſible, and that a Man may eaſily keep them if he will, as St. *Jerom* repreſents their Doctrine. Though, it is true, theſe Words may be taken in a moderate Senſe, and in a ſafe Meaning, yet it is certain thoſe Hereticks meant very ill; for (as both St. *Jerom* and St. *Auguſtin*, who lived in the time when the *Pelagian* Errors were firſt broached, bear witneſs) they maintained that the Law of God may be perfectly kept and fulfilled by Man, and that without the Help of divine Grace.

THESE Men are followed by the Divines of the *Roman Church*; for though the Romaniſts hold that the Law cannot be fulfilled but by the Aſſiſtance of divine Grace, yet they agree with the *Pelagians* in this, That Men may be righteous in this life by an exact and abſolute fulfilling the Law: They hold that God hath given ſome Men ſuch a Meaſure of Grace, that they may compleatly ſatisfy the Law, and be free from all Sin. ** *Bellarmin* expreſly aſſerts that ſinleſs Perfection is attainable in this Life. The Virgin *Mary* was void of all Sin whatſoever, ſay ſome of the *Roman* Doctors; and they tell us ſhe had this Privilege from her immaculate Conception. Thoſe of the Order of St. *Francis* perſwade themſelves, and would make others believe, that that Saint was wholly without Sin. Every one that is acquainted with the Writers of the *Roman* Perſwaſion knows that they uphold the Doctrine of perfect Righteouſneſs: They frequently aſſert that ſome Saints do actually obſerve all God's Commandments, and fail in none. And the Doctrine of *Perfection* makes way for that of *Supererrogation.* Hence you hear them ſtifly maintain that they have Righteouſneſs enough for themſelves, and alſo ſome to ſpare for others. He that ſaith he can do *all* he is commanded, will proceed to ſay he can do *more*, and then he will be lending the Merit of thoſe Works of Supererrogation unto others.

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* Ἄπειρα μὲν ἐςὶ τὰ καταρρυπαίνοντα τὴν ψυχὴν, ἅπερ ἐκνίψασθαι καὶ ἀπολούσασθαι παντελῶς οὐκ ἔνεςιν. De Mutat. Nomin.

† Ἀναμαρτήτους τοὺς σοφοὺς, τῷ ἀπεριπτώτους εἶναι. Laert. in Zenoph.

‡ 1 *John* i. 8.

‖ *v.* 10.

§ *Non eſſe impoſſibilia dei mandata, eaq; facilè cuſtodire hominem poſſe ſi velit.* Hieron. Epiſt. ad Creſ. 812.

** *De Eccleſ. Milit. l.* 8. *c.* 8.

With the Papiſts concur the * *Socinians* in the Point of Perfection, as they do alſo in ſome others. They are fierce Aſſerters of this, That we may perfectly keep the whole Law in this Life. Some *Antinomians* have let fall very unſafe Words tending to this purpoſe, as, that a Child of God can no more ſin than Chriſt could. Beſides theſe, it is well known that the † *Remonſtrants* and ſome *Anabaptiſts* hold Perfection in this preſent State.

The *Quakers* herd with all theſe, and are as forward as any of them to defend compleat Perfection of inherent Righteouſneſs, with the Excluſion of all Sin. *Solomon*'s righteous Man fell ſeven times a Day, but the *Quakers* righteous Man is not ſo labile a Creature, yea, he can keep himſelf from falling at all. Some of them, it is true, confeſs that good Men may fall into Sin, for they do not underſtand Perfection in that Senſe, as if a Man were free from Sin *always*: but they tell us a Man may be free from all Sin in Word, Thought, or Deed, *for a time*, and as to *ſome Actions*. *Barclay* in his *Apology* interpreting thoſe Words of *Solomon*, *There is no man that ſinneth not*, ſaith, the Meaning of that Place is, that at one time or other Men have ſinned: but then he adds, “[The different Diſpenſations are to be heeded: In *Solomon*'s Time it might be “ſo that there was none that ſinned not; it doth not follow therefore that “there is none now under the Goſpel.] But then I ask him this Queſtion, If there was a Change in the *Diſpenſations* as to this, how comes it to paſs that St. *John*, who was under the evangelick Diſpenſation, poſitively averrs, that *if we ſay we have no ſin, we deceive ourſelves*?

To evade this plain Text, the *Quaker* tells us, that the Apoſtle ſpeaks not of himſelf here, and he quotes *James* iii. 9, 10. But knowing that this would not be accepted as a tolerable Anſwer, he farther adjoins, that this Place ſpeaks not of the Commiſſion of Sin, but of the Seed of Sin: Actual ſinning and the Seed of Sin (which is in all) differ very much. After this Way of ſhuffling it were eaſy to evade any Text of Scripture. But to any Perſon who hath not a Mind to ſhift and collude, it is evident from the Context, that St. *John* ſpeaks of the Commiſſion of Sin, or actual ſinning; for *Confeſſion of Sin*, which he immediately after mentions, refers to this Kind, and not to any latent Seeds of Sin; and beſides, that we might be ſure of his Meaning, and that he ſpoke of *Sin properly ſo call'd*, he repeats the very *ſame* Words again, which he would not have done unleſs the Senſe had been plain, and according to the obvious Acception of the Words. Thus you ſee how the *Quakers* are downright *Papiſts* in the Doctrine of abſolute Perfection; and they will pervert and diſtort the ſacred Writings, that they may ſeem to patronize their Opinion. To conclude this Muſter of *Perfectioniſts*, it was the general Profeſſion and Perſwaſion of the *Adamites* (a Sect firſt erected by one *Picard*, who came out of the Low-Countries to *Bohemia*, and broach'd this Opinion there about the Year 1400.) and of the *Family of Love*, and is at this Day of moſt of the high-flown Sectaries, that they are without all Sin. It is their Maxim, that the true Church is devoid of all Impurity. Thus I have briefly ſhew'd you how the Orthodox Doctrine hath been impugned and gainſaid, and by whom.

I have only this to remark to you, that this Tenet of Abſolute Perfection proceeds from an ill Original, and tends to as bad an End; for the Root of it is ſpiritual Pride, and a confident and preſumptuous Conceit of themſelves; and as for the End and Iſſue of it, it tends directly to the Maintaining the Doctrine of Merit, for there is no Merit without Perfection: But when Men are perſwaded that they are perfect, they will ſoon think their Actions meritorious, and theſe (as you have heard) make way for Works of Supererrogation, which is the great Maſterpiece of *Popery*. And here by the by you may take Notice, that ſome who imagine they run away from *Popery*, and keep at a great Deſtance from it, yet really approach very near to it, nay, run into one of the chief Doctrines of it, for ſuch is that of *Perfection* in this Life: Whilſt they avouch this, they cannot clear themſelves of ſymbolizing with *Rome*. Let us then underſtand ourſelves aright, and ſee the Danger of this Opinion which I have ſet before you: Let us diſown all Claim to a ſinleſs State, and humbly acknowledge our beſt Works to be deficient, our moſt holy Actions imperfect. Our Gold is mixt with Droſs, our Light is checker'd with Shade, our moſt righteous Performances are blended with Sin. There are Alloys and Mixtures of Vice in all that we do: In ſhort, there is no Abſolute Perfection in us. So much for the firſt Propoſition. The

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* *Crel. Eth.* l. 2. c. 6. *Smalc. contr. Frantz. Diſp.* 12. *Schlichting.*

† *Apolog.* cap. 17.

IId. Is this, That (notwithſtanding what hath been ſaid) there is a *Perfection* to be attained in this Life. There are above a Hundred Places in the Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtaments, which expreſly mention this, and therefore thoſe that in this Controverſy *deny Perfection* are to be blamed; as you may obſerve ſome Divines, when they are confuting the other Party, maintain this Propoſition, That *Perfection is not attainable in this Life*; which is a downright Contradiction to ſeveral plain Texts of Scripture. Wherefore the contrary Propoſition, *viz.* That *Chriſtians* may and ought to attain to Perfection, is an indiſputable Truth, and founded on expreſs Words of Holy Writ. Our Buſineſs then is not to *deny* Perfection in the Saints, but to *diſtinguiſh* between the different Acceptions of *Perfection* in Scripture. The Servants of God are *perfect* in this World, this is not to be doubted; but the Queſtion is, *what Perfection* they are capable of, and may attain unto? This is the grand Query, and in Anſwer to this I ſay, it is, 1. A *comparative* Perfection. 2. An *imputative* one. 3. Not barely imputative, but alſo *perſonal* and *inherent*.

1. THE *Perfection* which holy Men attain to in this Life, is *comparative*, *i. e.* though they cannot arrive to an abſolute and ſinleſs Perfection, yet they may be ſaid, and expreſly are ſaid in Scripture, to be *perfect*, as they are compared either with others, or with themſelves at different Times. *Firſt*, I ſay, if they be compared with *others*, *viz.* 1. Thoſe that are no *Chriſtians*. 2. Thoſe that are prophane and wicked, of what Religion ſoever they are. 3. The holy, but weaker *Chriſtians*.

Firſt, COMPARE *Chriſtians* with thoſe that embrace another Religion, and ſo they may deſervedly be ſaid to be *perfect*. *Chriſtianity* in reſpect of *Judaiſm* is a perfect State, which we learn from the Author to the *Hebrews*, Chap. vii. Ver. 11. *If Perfection were by the levitical Prieſthood, what further Need was there that another Prieſt ſhould riſe after the Order of Melchiſedek?* Whence we may infer, that *Perfection* was not by the *Moſaical* Diſpenſation, but that it is by the Coming of *Chriſt* our great High-Prieſt. And again, Chap. vii. Ver. 19. *The Law* (*i. e.* the *Moſaical* or *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation) *made nothing perfect.* And again, Chap. x. Ver. 1. *The Law having a Shadow of good Things to come, and not the very Image of the Things, can never with thoſe Sacrifices, which they offer'd Year by Year continually, make the Comers thereunto perfect.* But the *Chriſtian* Church and Inſtitution, in Compariſon of that *Judaical* Inſtitution and Tabernacle, is call'd *a greater and more perfect Tabernacle*, Heb. ix. 11. And the Goſpel in this Reſpect is ſtiled *The perfect Law of Liberty*, Jam. i. 25.

I NEED not in the next Place, I hope, undertake to prove that the *Chriſtian* Religion is perfect in Compariſon of the *Pagan* and *Mahometan.* I queſtion not but you are ſufficiently perſwaded that neither of theſe have ſuch compleat Rules to direct Mens Actions by, nor ſuch excellent Principles to influence on Mens Practices, nor ſuch noble Deſigns nor ſuch ample Rewards to excite Mens Endeavours, as the Chriſtian Religion hath. This is the moſt exact Model of Worſhip, the moſt conſummate Syſtem of moral and divine Truths, and the moſt accurate Rule of our Lives and Manners. Thus the Chriſtian Religion makes its Followers *perfect*, in compariſon of others who adhere to other Ways of Religion.

Secondly, COMPARE the *Godly* with the *Wicked* and *Prophane*, (whatever Religion they pretend to) and thus likewiſe they are *perfect*. So *Noah* was a perfect Man in reſpect of the reſt of the World, who were generally at that time very lewd and wicked. And this, it is likely, is repreſented to us in *Gen.* vi. 9. where it is ſaid, *He was a juſt Man, and perfect in his Generations*, or, as the *Septuagint* render it, *in his Generation*, i. e. in the time wherein he lived. Therefore God ſaid to him, *Thee have I ſeen righteous before me in this Generation*, Gen. vii. 1. If *Noah*'s Life was compared with the Lives of the ungodly Wretches of that Age, he muſt be concluded to be a *perfect Man*. You read that ſome Kings of *Judah*, as *David*, *Joſiah*, *Hezekiah*, *Aſa*, &c. *walked with a* perfect Heart, namely, in reſpect of other Kings; particularly *Aſa*, though he did not wholly take away Idolatry; and though it be recorded of him, that he truſted in the Phyſicians more than in God when he was ſick, yet he was far better than ſome others; and on that Account it is ſaid, Aſa*'s Heart was* perfect *all his Days*, 1 Kings xv. 4. And thus ſome other godly Men may be ſaid in Scripture to be perfect, *viz.* in reſpect of thoſe that lived at the ſame time, who were prophane and wicked, and remarkable for their Impiety. So this Word is to be taken in *Deut.* xviii. 13. *Thou ſhalt be perfect with the Lord thy God*, i. e. (as the Context clears it) thou ſhalt be perfect in compariſon of other People: When thou art come into the Land of *Canaan*, thou ſhalt not follow the Abominations of its Inhabitants, there ſhall not be found among you *Wizards* and *Necromancers*, &c. *for all that do theſe Things are an Abomination to the Lord: But as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not ſuffer'd thee ſo to do*, Ver. 14. Thou muſt be perfect with the Lord, thou muſt be a peculiar People, and walk after another Manner, thou muſt be free from the Pollution of Idolatry, and entirely abſtain from all thoſe Practices which the Heathen Nations are addicted to. Here is a *comparative Perfection.*

Thirdly, COMPARE ſome Chriſtians with *other holy*, but *weaker*, or leſs eminent Chriſtians, and in this regard they are *perfect*. Thus the Apoſtle ſaith in 1 *Cor.* ii. 6. *We ſpeak Wiſdom among them that are perfect.* The Meaning is, that the Apoſtle and his Brethren ſpoke Wiſdom among thoſe that were more knowing Chriſtians than the reſt, that fully underſtood the Principles of Chriſtianity. Theſe are the τέλειοι who in other Places are called by the Apoſtle *ſtrong Men*, and *of full Age*, viz. adult Chriſtians, and ſuch as were come to Maturity, oppoſed to νήπιοι *Babes*, 1 *Cor.* iii. 1. Accordingly the Apoſtle exhorts the *Corinthians* that they would *in Underſtanding be Men*, or (as it ought rather to be tranſlated according to the Original) *be perfect*, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 20. Some Chriſtians have more excellent Endowments than others, and their Gifts and Graces ſhine brighter: Now, theſe *compared* with thoſe that are below them, are call'd *perfect*. And ſo the Word is to be underſtood in *Heb.* v. 14. *Strong Meat belongs to them that are perfect*, i. e. Thoſe Doctrines of Chriſtianity which require a more than ordinary Underſtanding, are fit for thoſe who are the more able Chriſtians.

So our Saviour himſelf uſeth this Word in *Mat.* xix. 21. *If thou wilt be perfect, ſell that thou haſt, and give to the Poor*, i. e. Whereas thou ſayeſt thou haſt kept all the Commandments, and lackeſt nothing (as we read in the foregoing Verſes) I will now try whether thou art ſuch a compleat Perſon as thou pretendeſt to be. If thou art defective in nothing, then certainly not in Charity. Go then, and out-do others, yea, out-do thy ſelf, by this which I propound to thee: Diſpoſe of what thou haſt to the Poor: Shew the World that thou art Maſter of Charity as well as of all other Virtues. If thou wilt be perfect, *i. e.* if thou wilt ſhew that thou art wanting in no Grace, and particularly if thou wilt be eminent for thy Charity, ſell thy Goods and Eſtate, and give them away in pure Alms, and come and follow me. This ſignal Act which *Chriſt* adviſeth him to, *viz.* of giving what he had to the Poor, is emphatically call'd *Perfection*: In compariſon of others, who came not up to this Height, he may be ſaid to be *perfect*. And ſo in a reſembling Manner, they who excel in Holineſs, and ſurpaſs others in virtuous and godly Deeds, may not undeſervedly be call'd *perfect*. Thus Perſons, as they are *compared with others*, may be ſaid to have attain'd Perfection.

AGAIN, They may be ſaid to have done this *as they are compared with themſelves*. At one time, that is, when they act Grace with greater Vigour, they may be ſaid to be perfect in reſpect of another Seaſon, that is, when they are very low and flat, and find in themſelves an exceeding Backwardneſs to pious Enterprizes and all religious Duties. Thus *David* is ſometimes (as we find in that excellent Book of Devotion compoſed by him) on the Wing, and ſoaring aloft; at other Times he is caſt down, and as it were lies grovling on the Ground; and ſo that holy Man *Job* is ſometimes elevated to a high Pitch of Faith and Patience, but at other Times he gives little Proof of theſe excellent Endowments in him; and he is ſo far from Perfection, that he ſeems to be ſunk into Deſpair. And thus *Elias* and *Jonas*, thus *Peter* and *Paul*, according to their different Actings, may be ſaid to be perfect or not perfect. For this is not to be denied, that theſe holy Men, and ſo likewiſe many other Servants of God, differ'd very much from themſelves. Look upon the Saints at different Times, and you'll ſcarcely know them to be the ſame Perſons. Their Failings and Imperfections are ſo conſpicuous, that we can hardly diſcern any thing elſe in them. Accordingly a godly Man may be ſaid to be perfect in *compariſon* of what he was or is at other Times. And thus I have ſhewn you how good and holy Men are *com-*

paratively perfect; which is the firſt Sort of Perfection I told you they are capable of.

2. Believers and holy Men have an *imputative Perfection:* This is the true *evangelical* Perfection, namely, the being perfect by another. You are to know then, that the *Covenant of Works* and the *Law* require perfect, abſolutely perfect Obedience, and it is neceſſary that ſuch Obedience be performed by every one. But then this is to be added, that this Obedience may either be performed by ourſelves in our own Perſon, or by another in our Stead, that other being appointed by God for that Purpoſe. Here then is the *Perfection* of Chriſtians, namely, it ariſeth from the Application of *Chriſt's* Righteouſneſs and Satiſfaction. By the perfect Righteouſneſs of *Chriſt* we are perfect, although our Graces are imperfect, and Sin be mixed with our beſt Performances: For *Sanctification* is not ſo full and large as *Juſtification:* For by *Chriſt's* Righteouſneſs imputed we are wholly juſtified or freed from the Guilt of Sin; but we are not entirely free from the Spot and Defilement of Sin by our being ſanctified. Theſe are not quite waſh'd away in this Life by the holy Spirit, but we are perfectly juſtified and pardoned by the Virtue of *Chriſt's* Blood; and this Juſtification is our evangelical Perfection: Or thus, the Imputation of *Chriſt's* perfect Righteouſneſs is our Perfection.

This was ſhadow'd forth by the Prophet *Ezekiel* in *chap.* xvi. *ver.* 14. where *Jeruſalem* is ſaid to be *perfect through the Comelineſs which the Lord hath put upon her.* And more plainly we are told that this is the Name of the Meſſias, *the Lord our Righteouſneſs,* Jer. xxiii. 6. More clearly yet the Apoſtle declares, that Chriſt Jeſus *of God is made unto us Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs, and Sanctification and Redemption,* 1 Cor. i. 30. Here is the right *Chriſtian Perfection,* and ſo it is expreſly call'd in *Col.* i. 28. where the Apoſtle acquaints us, that the End *of his preaching and warning every Man, and teaching in all Wiſdom, was that he might preſent every Man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus.* This is that which we infer from this Place, that Believers are *perfect in,* or through, *Chriſt Jeſus.* So ſaith the ſame Holy Writer in Heb. x. 14. *By one Offering he hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified.* By *Chriſt's* meritorious Oblation of himſelf on the Croſs, all the Faithful are firſt ſanctified, and then perfected.

This is a Perfection which the Goſpel alone diſcovers to us, this is the peculiar Product of Divine Revelation. As for the wiſeſt Philoſophers and gentile Sages, they knew nothing of it; they talk'd of *Perfection,* but they meant no other but what was of their own procuring. To be made perfect by another's Perfection was a Thing wholly hid from them. Let us then value this excellent Myſtery which hath been made known to us by the preaching of the Goſpel, and which no other Religion hath diſcover'd to the World. Let us prize this evangelical Truth, and let us faithfully aſſert and maintain it, whilſt even ſome who call themſelves *Chriſtians* mock at it. But let us the more vigorouſly own and defend this bleſſed Diſcovery, which is of ſuch vaſt Importance, and on which the very Foundations of Chriſtianity are laid. This one Thing makes the grand Difference between the *Old* and *New Covenant,* between the *Law* and the *Goſpel.* Under the former our own Works were our only Perfection, but under the latter it is otherwiſe; for *Chriſt* our Redeemer having fulfill'd the Law for us, is become our Righteouſneſs and Perfection. The Deſign of *Chriſt* in his Undertakings for Mankind was to make them righteous by his Righteouſneſs, which being perfect, theirs is ſo too. He obey'd in our Stead, therefore his Obedience is ours; and this Obedience being perfect, it follows that ours is of the ſame Nature. But

3. The Perfection of Believers in this Life, as it is *imputative,* ſo it is likewiſe *perſonal* and *inherent.* As they are righteous by another's Righteouſneſs, ſo 'tis as true that they are righteous by their own Righteouſneſs, and accordingly they have a Perfection of their own. This, no leſs than the other, is an evangelical Righteouſneſs, that is, it is ſuch as *Chriſt* in the Goſpel requireth. This, though it be not abſolute (as hath been ſaid) yet it is really inherent in them, and inſeparable from their Perſons: And it is ſix-fold.

1. The evangelical and perſonal Perfection of the Saints is a *Perfection of Sincerity.* This is intimated to us in thoſe Places of Scripture where *Perfection* is mentioned, as in Gen. vi. 9. *Noah was perfect, and walk'd with God.* And in *Gen.* xvii. 1.

Walk before me, and be thou perfect. One Expreſſion explains the other; whence I obſerve, that *walking with* or *before God* was the Perfection of the ancient Patriarchs. And what was their *walking before God* but an approving themſelves chiefly to God by *inward Sincerity?* Others *walk* as *before Men*, making ſhew of Religion by outward Appearances only; but the beſt Men live and walk as if God ſaw them, *i. e.* knew their Hearts, as moſt aſſuredly he doth. There is a *Perfection before Men*, or *in reſpect of Men*, i. e. when the Lives of the Faithful are ſuch that Man can ſee no Fault in them: But the *Perfection before God* is moſt to be prized, that is, when the inward Part is ſincere and upright, when we unfeignedly deſign God's Glory, when we act without Reſerve, and have no ſecret Love and Allowance of Sin.

NOAH was thus *perfect*, he was *upright*, and ſo the *Hebrew* Word is tranſlated in the Margin of your Bibles. Indeed this * Original Word ſignifies both *Perfection* and *Simplicity*, or *Uprightneſs:* So 'tis ſaid, *Jacob was a plain* or *ſimple Man*, Gen. xxv. 27. It is the ſame Word which is uſed here concerning *Noah*, only there it is in the Plural, and here in the Singular. *Noah* was a *perfect* or *upright Man:* So *Jacob* was a *perfect* or *plain*, ſincere, upright Man. Therefore our *Engliſh* Tranſlators have put one in the Text, and the other in the Margin, as much as to tell us that the *ſincere* or *plain Man* is the *perfect Man.*

NEXT, let us obſerve the Pſalmiſt's Words in *Pſal.* cxix. 1. *Bleſſed are the Perfect* (as it is in the Margin, though we tranſlate it *Undefiled*) *in the Way:* And the following Verſe explains it, *Bleſſed are they that ſeek him* with their whole Heart, *i. e.* they who are upright and ſincere. Of theſe Perſons it may be ſaid (as in the next Verſe) *they do no Iniquity*, they are eſteemed as ſinleſs, becauſe their Hearts are ſet againſt all Sin. Freedom from Diſſimulation and Hypocriſy is one Kind of Perfection. So in *Iſa.* xxxviii. 8. *Hezekiah* profeſſeth that he *had walked before God in* Truth, *and with a* perfect Heart. The latter is explain'd by the former: A *perfect Heart* is a *true Heart*, i. e. upright and ſincere; a ſingle Heart, oppoſed to a double and deceitful Heart. Truth and Sincerity go for Perfection in Scripture: Whence *Iſrael* is call'd *Jeſurun*, from a † Root, which denotes *Rectitude* or *Uprightneſs*, becauſe it is this which makes a true *Iſraelite.* So of *Job* it is ſaid, that he was *perfect and upright*, Chap. i. Ver. 1. *Perfection* and *Uprightneſs* are expreſſive one of another.

AS thoſe famous *Inſtitutions* give this Definition of *Juſtice*, that it is a conſtant and perpetual *Willingneſs* to render to every one his Due, and a late renowned ‡ Philoſopher defines Virtue in general after that Rate, *viz.* to be a conſtant *Reſolution* of acting according to right Reaſon, ſo much more in *Chriſtianity*, Virtue and Righteouſneſs are judged by the *ſincere Intention* and *Purpoſe of* the *Heart:* And he hath attained to the Height and Perfection of Religion who is ſincere and cordial, and is inwardly and unfeignedly affected with the Senſe of Godlineſs and Virtue. *Soundneſs* of Heart is our chief inherent Goodneſs, and this is our *Perfection* in this imperfect State. Before I proceed to the next Particular, I will take Notice of what the late Archbiſhop hath delivered, namely, that ** *ſincere Obedience is called by Divines evangelical Perfection, but very improperly.* Why *very improperly*, when we ſee that according to the Stile of the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture, it is a very proper Way of ſpeaking? We find in the Writings of the inſpir'd Penman, that *Sincerity* and *Perfection* are the ſame, and one expreſſes the other, and therefore it muſt be acknowledg'd that there is no Impropriety in this Manner of Speech, and conſequently when the foreſaid Writer aſſerts the contrary, he doth as good as tell us that not only our Divines, but the Scriptures, ſpeak improperly.

2. THE perſonal Perfection of Chriſtians is a Perfection of *impartial Obedience.* The Apoſtle prays for the *Theſſalonians*, that *the very God of Peace would ſanctify them wholly, that their whole Spirit, and Soul, and Body, may be preſerv'd blameleſs to the coming of Chriſt*, 1 Theſſ. v. 23. Here is *univerſal Sanctity*, which is called by ſome Divines a *Perfection of Parts;* as an Infant, though not ſo perfect as a Man, hath all the Parts which a Man hath, and ſo is perfect, but yet is not ſo perfect *in Degrees* as a grown Man. The Godly in this Life attain to the Perfection of Parts, *i. e.* all the Members and Faculties of Body and Soul are ſanctified, they want nothing that belongs to an entire Chriſtian; but they are not arrived to the Perfection of Degrees, *i. e.* they fall ſhort of that Height of Virtue

* Tam, or Tamin.

† *Jaſhar rectus fuit.*

‡ H. More *in Enchir. Ethic.*

** *Dr.* Tillotſon's *Serm. on* Heb. v. 9.

tue and Holineſs which ſhall be their Attainment in the other Life: They are not grown to the full Stature and Maturity of Grace which is reſerved for the future State. Mark it, in *Cantic.* iv. 1, 2, *&c.* *Chriſt* inſiſteth on the ſeveral Parts of his Church, her *Hands*, *Eyes*, *Teeth*, *Lips*, &c. A true Believer muſt have all his Parts and Members, for there is no Perfection without all the Parts. Think not thyſelf the true Spouſe of *Chriſt* till thou haſt all the Virtues and Graces of thy Bridegroom, though not in the ſame Meaſure and Proportion.

THERE is great Variety of Duties as well as Graces which conſtitutes a godly Man's Perfection in this Life: Of which the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, ſaying, * *I have ſeen an End of all Perfection, but thy Commandments are exceeding broad.* Here you ſee univerſal Obedience hath the Name of *Perfection*, for that is plainly implied in theſe Words, for he ſpeaks to this Effect, I have found that the Perfection which the World pretends to and boaſts of, is a mere Cheat, I have ſeen what it tends to, and what it ends in: All is Vanity and Folly in the Cloſe: But there is *another Perfection* which indeed more juſtly and truly deſerves that Name, this is real and ſolid, this leads us to and concludes in Satiſfaction and Felicity. This is no other than the impartial and unlimited keeping of God's Commands, which are many and various, large and broad, extending to innumerable Acts of Virtue, Goodneſs, and Holineſs. It is the *Perfection* of a good Man to have a Regard to all theſe, and to obſerve them without Exception.

ASK thyſelf then whether thou art inclined to keep (though with much Weakneſs) *every Commandment*, and to perform *every Duty* which is enjoin'd thee? Is there any Evil which thou doſt not abhor? And is there any Good which thou art not forward to embrace? The Counſel of *Ben Azai* muſt be obſerv'd, † make Haſte to a light Commandment as well as a heavy one, *i. e.* Be as conſcientious in keeping the leſſer as well as the greater Injunctions of the Law. Do not profeſs a Kindneſs to ſome religious Actions, and neglect the reſt. All *Chriſt's* Laws are equally to be regarded by us. A *perfect Chriſtian* is he that lives not in the Love or Practice of any known Sin, or the Omiſſion of any known Duty or Virtue. He *inwardly* believes and loves, and *outwardly* profeſſes and practices the Faith and Law of *Chriſt*. The Heart, the Tongue, the Life, are all concern'd. This is one Kind of Chriſtian Perfection.

3. THIS Perfection conſiſts in our *acquiring a Habit* of Virtue and Godlineſs. Thus we are taught by the Apoſtle in *Heb.* v. 14. that thoſe Chriſtians who are *of full Age* in Grace and Holineſs, *by reaſon of Uſe* (or by reaſon of a *Habit*, or *Perfection*, as the Margin renders it according to the Original) *have their Senſes exercis'd to diſcern both Good and Evil.* *Habit* and *Perfection* are thought to be equivalent. By habitual Godlineſs the ſpiritual Senſes of Believers are exercis'd, are conſtantly employ'd and ſet on Work, ſo that they muſt needs arrive to a very exact Diſcerning of what is good, and what is evil, and to an Ability of doing the one, and avoiding the other. This *Habit* of Godlineſs implies theſe two Things, *Firſt*, *Repeated* and *conſtant Actings.* The perfect Chriſtian is he that doth well *for the moſt part*: The Tenour and Courſe of his Life is virtuous and righteous. Thus if you compare *Heb.* vi. 1, 11. you'll find that a diligent Perſiſting in Grace and good Works to the End is Goſpel-Perfection: For in the firſt Verſe the Apoſtle exhorts them *to go on to Perfection*, which you may obſerve he oppoſeth to *Back-ſliding*, from the 4th to the 9th Verſe; and then in the 11th Verſe he tells them particularly what he means by *going on to Perfection. We deſire*, ſaith he, *that every one of you do ſhew the ſame Diligence* (which you have heretofore ſhew'd) *to the full Aſſurance of Hope unto the End: that ye be not ſlothful, but Followers of them who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes.* This is to *go on to Perfection*: By patient continuing in well-doing, by an uninterrupted Courſe of doing Good, to come at laſt to contract an *habitual Holineſs*, which is interpretatively *Perfection*. And this ſeems to be intimated in what the Apoſtle ſaith in Gal. iii. 3. *Are ye ſo fooliſh? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the Fleſh?* Where he ſuggeſts to them, by a ſmart way of Interrogation, that their leaving off to act according to their firſt Beginning was not the Way to Perfection: Therefore on the contrary it is implied, that perſiſting and continuing in the Ways of Holineſs is the beſt Courſe they can take to render themſelves compleat and perfect Chriſtians. And I could obſerve to thoſe Auditors who are

* Pſal. cxix. 96.

† *Curre ad præceptum leve tanquam ad grave.* Avoth. c. 4.

critical, that the * Words both in *Latin* and *Greek* which denote *Perfection* confirm this Notion, for they ſignify to *do a thing throughly*, to *accompliſh and finiſh a Work*, to *make an end of what was begun*. This is the ſtrict Import of Perfection.

But, *Secondly*, As this implies Conſtancy of Acting, ſo likewiſe *Eaſineſs* and *Readineſs in Acting*, a Delight and Complacency in what we do: For a *Habit* always produceth theſe. Holy Men act in Religion without Reluctancy: Chriſt's Yoke is eaſy to them, their Duty is pleaſurable, they perform it with unſpeakable Alacrity, they run the Ways of God's Commandments, and are not weary. The *Perfection* of chriſtian and virtuous Actions conſiſts in this, that we firſt undertake them with Willingneſs and Readineſs, and then do them with Chearfulneſs and Delight. Thus Religion is *perfected* by *Habit*, which conſiſts in continued Acts of Virtue, and in the Pleaſure we take in them: Yea, I may add, in a *Neceſſity* of doing them, for a Man brings himſelf by an habitual Conſtancy in Virtue to a happy Neceſſity of being virtuous and good: So that it may be ſaid of him, as of *Cato* of old, he † did well becauſe he could not do otherwiſe.

4. To climb to the moſt *heroick Acts and Atchievements* of Chriſtianity is *Perfection*. Conſequently Self-denial, taking up the Croſs, profound Humility, Patience, Heavenly-mindedneſs, great Mercifulneſs and extenſive Charity, denominate a Perſon *perfect*. To this Purpoſe I alledge, *James* i. 4. *Let Patience have its perfect Work*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing*. Whence it is reaſonable to infer, that the Man who hath attained to this excellent Grace of *Patience*, and poſſeſſeth it in its *Height* and *utmoſt Vigour*, is a *perfect* and *entire* Chriſtian. In the Allowance of the Goſpel he is ſuch. And ſo it holds good of all other particular Graces, to which many Things muſt concur to make them compleat. There is an *Imperfection* in them, till ſuch and ſuch Things are added to them: But when all thoſe meet, and the Virtues are come to their height, then they may be ſaid to be perfect *ſuo modo*.

Be pleaſed to conſult *Mat*. v. 48. *Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect*. It is the higheſt Expreſſion in the whole Word of God. Here is *Perfection* required of us, yea ſuch Perfection as is in *God himſelf*: But it cannot be meant of a Perfection that is equal to his, for then Saints would be Gods, which is both abſurd and blaſphemous to aſſert. Here therefore is enjoined a *Likeneſs* or Reſemblance, not an *Equality* of Perfection with God, not the ſame *Degrees* of Purity and Righteouſneſs, but the ſame *Kind* and *Truth* of them. But if you would know what particular Act or Kind of Perfection is here intended, St. *Luke* (who alſo relates this Paſſage of our Saviour) will acquaint you. With him it is thus, *Be ye merciful as your Father alſo is merciful*, ch. vi. v. 36. whence I gather, that as Mercifulneſs is one of the moſt eminent Attributes of God, ſo in Chriſtians it is their Perfection. Heartily to forgive, and to do good to thoſe that are in Diſtreſs, notwithſtanding they are our Enemies (for this particularly refers to *loving our Enemies, and doing Good to them*, ver. 35.) is to be like God. By ſuch Acts of Mercifulneſs we approach near to the divine Nature, and become in a manner *perfect*, for Mercifulneſs is in Chriſt's Eſteem no leſs than *Perfection*. Hither you may refer that Place before-named, *If thou wilt be perfect, ſell that thou haſt, and give to the Poor*. Extraordinary Charity to thoſe that are in need is reckoned to be the Work of a perfect Chriſtian. Wherefore this Love or Charity is ſtiled by the Apoſtle *the Bond of Perfectneſs*, Col. iii. 14.

And there is alſo the Perfection of Love as it hath God for its Object. *There is no fear in* this *Love*, ſaith St. *John*, *for perfect Love caſteth out Fear: That that feareth therefore is not made perfect in Love*. It follows then, that a Believer is made *perfect in* or by that Love which is deſtitute of Fear: When Love is come to this Pitch, it is a chief Part of a Chriſtian's Perfection.

And ſo for that eminent Grace of *Faith*, that likewiſe when it is compleat, is ſaid to be *perfect*, Jam. ii. 22. *Faith is made perfect by Works*. Whilſt Faith is void of good Works it is a poor, ſorry, deficient Thing; but when theſe are in Conjunction with it, it hath its utmoſt Perfection.

Laſtly, To be very eminent and exact in any one Duty of our Religion, to excel in any one Grace, eſpecially if it be very difficult, is in Scripture-language *Perfection*. This Kind of Perfection is meant in theſe Words, *That the Man of*

* *Perficere, perfectum*: τελεῖν, ἀποτελεῖν, τελειοῦν, τελείωσις, ἐντελής.

† *Bene fecit quòd aliter facere non potuit*. Paterc.

God may be perfect, 2 Tim. iii. 17. that is, that he may excel with reſpect to the miniſterial Function. So a particular Attainment and Eminency is to be underſtood in *James* iii. 2. *If any Man offend not in Word, the ſame is a perfect Man*, that is, if he can arrive to this, to rule his Tongue (which is ſo hard a Taſk, and wherein the generality of Men do ſo fail) if he can govern this Member which is ſo unruly, he may rightly be deemed to have attained to Perfection. He that can do this can do more; if he hath got the Maſtery here, it is not to be queſtioned but that he hath the entire Command of himſelf in all other Parts of Religion.

5. To *acknowledge our Failings*, and to be *throughly ſenſible of our Imperfections* is the true *Goſpel-Perfection*. This was St. **Auguſtin*'s, and † St. *Jerom*'s Doctrine long ago. They aſſert that our confeſſing of and being humbled for our Delinquencies and Miſcarriages is the Chriſtian Perfection. The *Publican*, who was afraid to lift up his Eyes to Heaven (againſt which he had ſo often offended) but ſmote upon his Breaſt, ſaying, *God me merciful to me a ſinner*, went down to his Houſe || *juſtified*, abſolved, acquitted of God, whilſt the ſelf-juſtifying *Phariſee* was rejected and condemned. He that is *juſtified* is blameleſs and perfect in God's Eyes: And conſequently the Man who acts as the Publican did, *i. e.* who trembles under the Senſe of his Failings and Miſcarriages, and humbly begs Pardon and Forgiveneſs, is *perfect* in the Evangelical Meaning, in the mild and favourable Acception of the Goſpel. This is *perfecting Holineſs in the Fear of God*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 2 *Cor.* vii. 1. When we have an awful Dread of the Divine Majeſty becauſe of our Sins and Tranſgreſſions, and are afraid of offending and diſpleaſing our heavenly Father, and continually humble ourſelves before him in the Senſe of our weak and ſinful Nature, we then tend towards *Perfection*: We may apply thoſe Words of St. *Paul*, *Our Strength is made perfect in Weakneſs*, 2 Cor. xii. By living in a conſtant Apprehenſion of our Weakneſs we become ſtrong, by groaning under our Imperfections we grow perfect. Thus it is in the Nature of the Thing itſelf, and thus it is alſo in the Eſteem of the Almighty, for when we feelingly acknowledge our Defects, then we are perfect in the evangelical Accounts; this being the ſingular Goodneſs and Clemency of Heaven towards us, that our unfeigned Sorrow and Repentance are accepted in the Place of Innocence: And when we are deeply ſenſible of our Sins, we are interpreted to be without Sin.

6thly and Laſtly, To deſire and *endeavour after the abſolute and conſummate Perfection*, to ſtrive to come as near to it as may be, and as this State is capable of, this is *Goſpel-Perfection*. He that aims at a Star ſhall ſhoot higher than he that takes a Shrub for his Mark. Covet earneſtly the beſt things, aſpire to the higheſt Pitch of Holineſs. * *Whatſoever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with thy Might*; that is all that is required of thee. And if you conſult other Places of the Old Teſtament you will find that the *perfect Man* there ſpoken of is he that labours to be as righteous as he can in this Life. This is clear from many Paſſages which might be alledged. And as for the New Teſtament, it appears thence, that the *utmoſt Endeavours* of the Saints are their Perfection. The Apoſtle in *Phil.* iii. 11. tells us, that *he ſuffered the loſs of all things, and counted them but Dung, if by any Means he might attain to the Reſurrection of the Dead*, i. e. to as perfect a State as the Saints ſhall be in when they are riſen from the dead, and are become ſinleſs: *Not as though he had already attained* to that abſolute Perfection, *either were already perfect* in that high Degree: *But he followed after, if that he might apprehend that for which alſo he was apprehended of Chriſt*, *v.* 12. The Apoſtle makes uſe of a ** Word here which the *Greek* Philoſophers frequently uſed. When they had a very full and adequate Perception of ſome hidden and obſcure Things, they were wont to ſay, they *apprehended* or *comprehended* them; which manner of Speech || *Tully* ſaith was firſt borrowed from *Zeno* the Founder of Stoiciſm. But the Apoſtle ingenuouſly confeſſeth that he had not attained to the full and perfect Knowledge of many things, he was no *Apprehenſor* yet: Or rather, he applies it to the whole of Religion, and acknowledgeth he was not therein compleat and perfect. *Brethren*, ſaith he, *I count not myſelf to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting thoſe things which are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before, I preſs towards the Mark, for the Prize*

* *Si qua fidelium hic eſſe poteſt perfectio, in eo conſiſtit ut ſe imperfectos eſſe cognoſcant.* Lib. de perfectâ juſtitiâ.

† *Hæc eſt in omnibus ſola perfectio, ſuæ imperfectionis cognitio.* Epiſt. ad Theod.

|| *Luke* xviii. 14.

* *Eccl.* ix. 10.

** καταλαμβάνειν.

|| *Quæſt. Academ.*

of the high Calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus, v. 13, 14. Here you ſee that *following after, reaching forth, preſſing towards,* are all the Perfection that he knoweth. He longs and breaths after a conſummate State of Knowledge and Virtue; he uſeth his utmoſt Endeavour, he ſtrives for Perfection and Fulneſs of Grace; and this Longing, Endeavouring and Striving, are Perfection, as appears from what follows in the next Verſe, *Let us therefore, as many as be* perfect, *be thus minded.* On which Words one of the ancient Fathers hath this remarkable Comment, * "The "Apoſtle, ſaith he, reckons himſelf *Perfect,* becauſe he was freed from his former Life, and becauſe he followed after a better, not as if he were perfect in "Knowledge, but as one that *deſireth* and *longeth after that which is perfect.*" And another eminent Father of the Chriſtian Church is of the ſame Judgment: † "All "our Care and Study, ſaith he, muſt be that we fall not ſhort of that Perfection "which we are able to attain to, for this I take to be the Perfection of human "Nature, namely, that in that which is good we be always *deſiring to have* "*more.*" The induſtrious Chriſtian who ſtrives for the greateſt Attainments of Grace is ſaid to be *perfect,* notwithſtanding his great and multiplied Infirmities, as the higheſt Mountains do not hinder the Earth from being round. A diligent and earneſt Endeavour to keep God's Commandments impartially and univerſally, although attended with many Failings, is Chriſtian Perfection.

THUS I have ſet before you the *ſeveral Kinds of Perfection:* And from what hath been delivered in proſecution of the *two Propoſitions,* you may be put into a way to reconcile thoſe Places of Scripture which ſpeak of *Perfection.* There are ſome Texts that do plainly aſſert the Attainableneſs of this; and others ſeem to oppoſe and deny it. How to make theſe agree is a Matter of great Concern, as well as of great Difficulty. With what Succeſs I have travelled in this Argument, I leave it to you to judge. I have let you ſee *what Perfection* it is that the Scripture diſowns, and I have plainly ſhewed you *what Perfection* it aſſerts and allows of: So that from what hath been ſaid you may now with eaſe ſolve thoſe Places of Scripture which are uſually brought by the Patrons of Abſolute Perfection: And you know likewiſe how to maintain the Doctrine of Perfection which is conſonant to and eſtabliſhed by Scripture and right Reaſon.

AND this which I have delivered will give you a true Account of that Controverſy, whether there be a Poſſibility of keeping all Chriſt's Commandments? The Council of *Trent* decides it peremptorily with a Curſe, *If one ſhall ſay that God's Commands are impoſſible to be kept* (and that *without Sin, for they profeſs they mean ſo) by a Man that is juſtified and in the State of Grace, let him be accurſed.* But we are to go another way to Work, if we would decide this Matter impartially. From the Premiſes we are taught to believe and conclude in this Caſe, that there is no keeping of Chriſt's Precepts without Sin, becauſe abſolute and ſinleſs Obedience is not the Purchaſe of this Life. And yet it is certain that none of Chriſt's Laws are impoſſible to be kept, and that perfectly too; for Believers obey Chriſt's Precepts with that Obedience and Perfection which he commands, which he expecteth of us, and which he is pleaſed with. Now, he expects not, he commands not, an abſolute and ſinleſs Obedience to his Precepts, becauſe this is impoſſible in our preſent Circumſtances, and in the Condition we are in in this Life. But it is poſſible to obey all his Laws with a Mixture of Sin and Infirmity: And if this Obedience be *ſincere, impartial, habitual,* and *with our utmoſt Strength and Ability,* and with *Endeavours after greater Attainments,* it is accounted *Perfection.* The Man who obeys Chriſt's Laws thus wants nothing that is eſſential to Piety and Salvation: He is Perfect with Evangelical Perfection, though not Legal, and according to the Rigour of the old Covenant.

AND here, before I paſs to the next Propoſition, you may obſerve how thoſe Men who boaſt of *Abſolute Perfection* pervert the Methods of the moſt High, and mingle Earth and Heaven together: They confound the preſent and future State of the Godly; they conſider not that a perfect or ſinleſs Keeping of God's Laws is not agreeable to the imperfect State of Man in this World, and that Heaven is reſerved for us as the only perfect State of Grace, for Glory is no other than Grace perfected and conſummated. Of this heavenly State the Apoſtle ſpeaks in 1 *Cor.* xiii. 10. *When that which is perfect is come, then that which is imperfect ſhall be done away,* and not before; and therefore it is Folly to expect

* Τέλειον ἑαυτὸν ἡγεῖται, &c. Clem. Alex. Pædag. l. 1. c. 6.

† Πᾶσαν τοίνυν ἐπιδεικτέον σπουδὴν, &c. Greg. Nyſ. de vitâ Moſis.

expect it now. Of that future Perfection thoſe Words in *Eph.* v. 27. are to be meant, where ſpeaking of the Church, the Apoſtle ſaith, Chriſt *will preſent it to himſelf a glorious Church, not having ſpot nor wrinkle, nor any ſuch thing.* The Spouſe of Chriſt hath no Deformity, no *Spot*, *i. e.* no great and notorious Sins; no *Wrinkle*, i. e. no leſſer Sins; but this is ſpoken of the *Church Triumphant* in Heaven, which is therefore here called *Glorious.* Or if you will needs have this to be underſtood of the *Church Militant*, then the Apoſtle's Words muſt be taken in the Senſe which I have before ſet down, and we muſt underſtand him ſpeaking of what the Church is by Chriſt's Acceptance, and by Reaſon of his Righteouſneſs imputed to it, and likewiſe what it is in itſelf, as to Sincerity and Endeavour. In theſe reſpects, and ſome others above-mentioned, the Church may be ſaid to be Perfect. But if we ſpeak of an abſolute and ſinleſs Perfection in the Perſons of the Saints, they are Strangers to this in this World: And it is ordained and conſtituted by God, that they ſhall not know what it is till they come to Heaven, which is the great Aſſembly of *the Spirits of juſt men made perfect*, Heb. xii. 23. Let us then underſtand aright our preſent Condition, and ſee how it differs from that which is to come. Heaven is deſigned by God for abſolute and compleat Perfection; but before we arrive there, we are capable of a Perfection proper to this preſent State, and we muſt be very ſollicitous and careful to be Poſſeſſors of it, otherwiſe we ſhall fall ſhort of that future one. I proceed then to the

IIId. PROPOSITION, which is this, that every Chriſtian ought to make it his Buſineſs to *attain* this Perfection which I have been ſpeaking of. As St. *James* ſaith of Patience, ſo ſay I of all Virtues, Let them *have their perfect Work.* Be careful that this *Perfection* be made up of all its *Dimenſions*; its due *Length*, that it reach from the Beginning to the End of all our Actions, and that we continue in the Diſcharge of our Duty with Conſtancy and Perſeverance; its juſt *Breadth*, that it ſpread on every ſide to all Duties, all Relations, all States and Capacities, that our Obedience be univerſal and impartial, and have a very wide Circumference; its right *Depth*, i. e. that it proceed from the Bottom of the Heart, that it be rooted and well-grounded, that it be ſubſtantial and ſincere, that we be not lightly tinctured with Virtue, but * deeply and throughly dy'd with it. The Apoſtle hath added a *fourth Dimenſion*, and ſo will I, namely, *Height.* Chriſtian Perfection aſpires to the higheſt Duties, the moſt exalted and difficult Graces, it climbs up to the utmoſt Top of Virtue and Holineſs. Thus labour to be compleat and entire in your Religion; do every thing without Reſerves, Ingenuouſly, Freely, Nobly. In brief, follow that Advice which *Socrates* uſed to commend exceedingly to his Scholars, *viz.* † *to act to your utmoſt.* Through your whole Life conſtantly obſerve this Rule, To do all you can in the Service of God.

TO which I muſt add two Rules more, the firſt of which is this, Repent of what you leave undone, or what you do amiſs; be heartily ſorry that you can do no more of what you ought to do, and that you have done ſo much of what you ought not to have done. The ſecond is, After all your Omiſſions and Commiſſions, rely on Chriſt's Merits who hath performed perfect Obedience for you. Thus you will be perfect, *i. e.* you will arrive to the perfecteſt State that this Life is capable of.

AND if you would know *by what Methods* you may moſt ſucceſsfully purſue and at laſt obtain this Goſpel-Perfection, I can only tell you, that the *Means* and *Directions* in order to it are the ſame with thoſe that I commended to you for your *Growing in Grace.* Therefore let thoſe be conſulted and duly practiſed by you. Evangelical Perfection is not to be ſought by any enthuſiaſtick Flights, and by affecting extraordinary Diſcoveries and Helps, but you muſt tread in the uſual and appointed Path of God's Ordinances, you muſt take the Way and Courſe that is preſcribed you by the Word of God, namely, Self-Examination, Meditation, Communion of Saints, ardent Prayer, reading the holy Scriptures, hearing the Word. *The holy ſcriptures* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *are able to make us wiſe unto ſalvation*; and he adds, *all Scripture* (i. e. all the *holy Scripture* before-mentioned) *is given by inſpiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs, that the man of God may be* perfect, throughly

* δικαιοσύνῃ βεβαμμένοι ἐις βάθος. Antonin.

† Καδδύναμιν ἔρδειν. Xenoph. Memorab. l. 1.

ly furniſhed *to every good work*, 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17. If the Writings of the *Old Teſtament* (of which he ſpeaks here) were able to make the Man of God *Perfect*, how much more able are the Writings of the *New Teſtament* (which are the laſt and fulleſt Diſcovery of God's Will) to render thoſe perfect who diligently ſearch into them and continually ſtudy them? If you are deſirous to be Perfect, read this holy Volume, which ſets before you the Examples of the moſt eminent Saints and Servants of God, yea, which preſents you with the Life of the Holy Jeſus, an Example of ſpotleſs and ſinleſs Perfection.

WE meet in the World with ſeveral Characters of Things and Perſons which are very excellent and noble; but when we come to ſearch into them, there is no ſuch thing to be found. The Pourtraiture ſheweth what the Thing or Perſons ſhould be rather than what it is. What rare Models and Patterns are *Plato's* Common-wealth, the *Stoicks* Wiſe Man, *Xenophon's* Captain or Commander, *Tully's* Orator, *Galen's* Healthful State of Body? and I might inſtance in * others that are Modern, but alaſs! all theſe are feigned Examples, they are Repreſentations of Perſons and Things not as they really are, but what they are deſired and wiſhed to be; the Examples themſelves were never extant. We have an Idea rather than a true Platform ſet before us. But in the Character and Example of our Lord and Saviour it is quite otherwiſe: Here is both a perfect and a real Pattern. As in the former ones the Words exceed the Things, yea, oftentimes repreſent that which is not, ſo here, on the contrary, the Things themſelves infinitely ſurpaſs the Words which are made uſe of to ſet them forth; and there is nothing repreſented to us but what really was. This is it which gives this ſacred Volume the Pre-eminence before all others; this makes it worthy of our Meditation and Study above all Writings whatſoever. Therefore daily and hourly conſult it, and think no time better ſpent than in this Employment.

* *Balſac's* Prince, *Overbury's* Wiſe, &c.

AND as for the *Miniſtry of the Word*, that is, the Explaining and Applying of the holy Scriptures by the Preachers of the Goſpel, St. *Paul* aſſures you, that their Office was deſign'd on purpoſe *for the perfecting of the ſaints*, Eph. iv. 12. By the Help of the Evangelical *Paſtors* and *Teachers* (as he tells us in the next Verſe) *we come to a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt.* I could note here, that this very Expreſſion of a *perfect man* is made uſe of by the great moral Philoſopher *Epictetus* in the like Senſe; only he uſeth it to expreſs an adult Perſon in *Morality*, but the Apoſtle ſignifies by it one that is come to full Age in *Chriſtianity*. Now, a Man that is of full Age is a *perfect Man* although he hath ſome Infirmities and Diſeaſes. So it is here, we may be accompliſhed and perfect Chriſtians notwithſtanding our ſpiritual Weakneſſes and Maladies; but then this muſt be done, we muſt *endeavour* to free ourſelves of theſe Infirmities, and to cure our Maladies and Diſeaſes. We muſt be careful to diſcharge our ſeveral Duties with Sincerity according to our Knowledge, we muſt bewail our Infirmities and Defects, we muſt ſtrive to live as uprightly as is poſſible for us.

TO this End we ought to be acquainted with the true Meaſures and juſt Boundaries of Virtue, we muſt learn to be exact in all Manner of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, *i. e.* to be Devout without Superſtition, to be Humble without baſe Compliance, to be Juſt without Rigour, to be Charitable without Profuſeneſs, to be Generous without Arrogance, to be Patient without Stupidity, and to be Zealous without Raſhneſs and Indiſcretion. If we duly obſerve theſe Limits, we ſhall certainly reach the Goſpel-Perfection. In a word, though it is not poſſible in this mortal State to arrive to thoſe perfect and compleat Degrees which we ſhall attain to hereafter, yet let us now *begin* that here which ſhall be *perfected* in another World.

† *Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the Dead our Lord Jeſus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlaſting Covenant, make you perfect in every good Work, to do his Will, working in you that which is well-pleaſing in his Sight, through Jeſus Chriſt, to whom be Glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

† *Heb.* xiii. 20, 21.

A
DISCOURSE
OF
PERSEVERANCE.

REVELATIONS iii. 11. the latter Part.

Hold that faſt which thou haſt, that no Man take thy Crown.

WITHOUT any prefacing to theſe Words, I take Notice of theſe two Things in them, *Firſt*, An important Duty, [*Hold that faſt which thou haſt*]; *Secondly*, A Reaſon or Motive to inforce the Practice of that Duty, [*that no Man take thy Crown*]. From the firſt of theſe I preſent you with this plain Obſervation, that thoſe who are ſincere Chriſtians ought to be very careful that they hold faſt and preſerve that which they have. Or thus, They that are good and holy ought to perſevere in their Holineſs, and continue in it to the End. This is a Duty often mentioned, and as often preſs'd upon us in the holy Scriptures. *Buy the Truth, and ſell it not*, i. e. part not with it on any Terms, was the Advice of the wiſe *Solomon*. Our Saviour exhorted his Diſciples to this when he bid them *abide in him*, Joh. xv. 4. And he inculcates the ſame in four or five Verſes together in the ſame Place; adding this in another Place, that *if they continue in his Words, then they are his Diſciples indeed*, Joh. viii. 31. *Perſeverance* is the Character of a true Diſciple of Chriſt. This the Apoſtle *Barnabas* exhorted his new Converts to, *with Purpoſe of Heart to* cleave *unto the Lord*, Acts xii. 23. This is call'd *continuing in the Grace of God*, Acts xiii. 43. *Continuing in the Faith*, Col. i. 23. *Patient Continuance in well-doing*, Rom. ii. 7. *Standing faſt in the Lord*, Phil. iv. i. Theſſ. iii. 8. And St. *Paul* urgeth this very frequently in his Writings: *Stand faſt in the Faith*, (ſaith he) *quit yourſelves like Men, be ſtrong*, 2 Cor. xvi. 13. *Be not toſſed too and fro and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine*, Eph. iv. 14. *Hold faſt the Form of ſound Words: That good Thing which was committed to thee keep by the Holy Ghoſt which dwelleth in us*, 2 Tim. i. 14. And becauſe there is a double Apoſtacy, *viz.* from Truth into Error, and from Holineſs into evil Manners, therefore he enjoineth us *to hold faſt our Profeſſion*, Heb. iv. 14. and *to hold faſt that which is good*, 1 Theſſ. v. 21. that is, we muſt continue both in the Acknowledgment of the Truth, and in the Practice of it; we muſt not only profeſs the Articles of our Religion, but obey its Laws and Precepts. To this tends St. *Peter's* ter's Caution in *Ep.* 2. *chap.* iii. *ver.* 17, 18. *Beware leſt ye being led away by the Error of the Wicked, fall from your own Stedfaſtneſs.* St. *John* likewiſe urgeth this in *Rev.* ii. 25. *That which ye have, hold faſt till I come.* And here again in my Text, *Hold that faſt which thou haſt, that no Man take thy Crown.* You muſt by no Means abandon the Faith and Truth which ye once eſpouſed, you muſt continue in Grace and perſiſt in the Ways of Virtue, maugre all Oppoſition. A Chriſtian ought to ſtrive and endeavour for final Holineſs. He muſt perſevere not only in the Profeſſion of all divine Truths, but in the Performance of all the Duties which are enjoin'd by the Chriſtian Religion.

In proſecuting of this, I have but theſe two Things to do: 1. To ſhew you *upon what Accounts* you are obliged to this particular Duty of Perſeverance in Religion, where I ſhall have Occaſion to bring in the *Reaſon* mention'd in the Text. 2. To offer to you *the moſt effectual Helps* to this Perſeverance, and at the ſame time to let you ſee what are the moſt ſovereign Remedies againſt Apoſtacy.

I. Let us ſee *on what Accounts* we are obliged to be careful that we perſevere in Truth and Godlineſs. Here I will ſhew you, *Firſt*, the *Benefit of Perſeverance*, and, *Secondly*, the *Evil of Apoſtacy.*

Firſt, As to the Benefit and Advantage of Perſevering, it were enough to ſay that this is that which will give us an Aſſurance of the Soundneſs and Sincerity of our Hearts, and of the Truth and Reality of our Holineſs. Many ſet out of *Sodom* as *Lot*'s Wife did: They go a little way, and look back: Their good Beginnings are ſoon daſh'd, and their End is very deplorable. *Saul* and *Solomon*, two Kings choſen of God, began exceeding well, but their Cloſe was of another Nature. They reſemble the *Aſſyrian* Statue which was made of degenerating Materials: The Golden Head was faſtned to a Breaſt of Silver, this was join'd with Brazen Thighs, thoſe were ſupported with Iron Leggs, and theſe dwindled into Feet of Clay. Thus is it in the preſent Caſe which we are diſcourſing of; many Mens Beginnings are tolerably good, but they grow worſe and worſe afterwards, and their End is worſt of all. Therefore it is the Concluſion and Iſſue that muſt be the Trial of Men. Hence it is that *Perſeverance* is the great Criterion of the Truth of Grace in them, and the main Evidence of their being rooted and grounded in Chriſtianity. The Stars which you ſee fall are not real ones, but Meteors and fiery Exhalations, which ſometimes do ape a Star, and ſeem to be very high: But indeed they are placed low, and blaze no longer than whilſt their dying Matter laſts. Thus ſome that profeſs Chriſtianity ſeem to act in a very high Sphere, and they paſs for burning and ſhining Lights, but how often (to the Diſgrace even of their high Calling) do they expire, and end in a ſhameful Darkneſs? But *the Path of the Juſt* (i. e. of thoſe who are really ſo) *is as the ſhining Light* of the Sun, *which ſhineth more and more unto the perfect Day*, Prov. iv. 8. Its Rays grow brighter and ſtronger, and the higher it riſeth, the more Power it hath to ſcatter the Miſts and Clouds. A Chriſtian is not known by his Beginning, but by the Period that he makes. *Judas* began well, and *Paul* very ill, but the former ended very unhappily, and the latter very ſucceſsfully.

I might add, that where the ſtedfaſt Spirit prevails, there the very Failings and Lapſes of God's Servants put new Strength into them: Like *Antæus* in the Poet, by touching the Earth they renew their Force, and are the ſtronger for being foiled. Like the Palm-Tree (to which the Righteous are compared) they riſe by being depreſs'd, and their Burden doth but lift them higher. They experience the Truth of the Apoſtle's Paradox, *When I am weak then am I ſtrong*: For he that is bleſs'd with this adamantine Spirit knows how to grapple with Temptations, and to receive Advantage by them: And whenever he falls, he riſeth up with a greater Ability to ſtand. He is like him whom our Saviour ſpeaks of, who *built his Houſe upon a Rock*, a ſtedfaſt, unmoveable Foundation: And though the Rain deſcends, and daſheth upon the upper Parts of it, though the Floods endanger the lower Parts, and though the Winds blow, and beat upon the Sides of it, yet it ſtands impregnable becauſe it is founded on a Rock, the Rock of *Perſeverance.* This certainly cannot but commend this Grace to us, and convince us of the Excellency of it.

In the next Place I will ſhew the *Advantage* of this admirable Gift from that Portion of Scripture to which my *Text* belongs. Be pleaſed then to conſult the

8th *v.* of this Chapter, *Thou haſt kept my Word* (ſaith Chriſt to the Church of *Philadelphia*), *and haſt not denied my Name.* Here their Perſeverance is acknowledged: Now, obſerve in the next Words how it is approved of, and what are the Advantages that come by it. *Behold I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, to come and worſhip before thy Feet, and to know that I have loved thee,* i. e. I will make Hereticks, Apoſtates and falſe Brethren (Men that make nothing of abandoning Religion) aſhamed and confounded: They ſhall at laſt be forced to condemn their own Hypocriſy and Apoſtacy, and to reverence that Sincerity and Uprightneſs which appear in the Lives of thoſe holy Men whom no Temptations could withdraw from their Duty, but who in all Seaſons held faſt their Integrity, and whilſt others fell back, kept their Standing, and declined not in the leaſt from their Duty. Thus Conſtancy and Perſeverance are *honourable* even in the Eyes of thoſe that fall from the Truth, much more among thoſe who hold it faſt: Whereas all Renegades in Religion are ignominious and infamous, as *Judas* and *Julian*, who need no other Brand than that of *Apoſtates.* So then the Reproach that accompanies this Sin ſhould deter us from it, if we be Perſons of ingenuous Spirits, and value our Name and Credit.

It follows, *v.* 10. *Becauſe thou haſt kept the Word of my Patience, I alſo will keep thee from the Hour of Temptation, which ſhall come upon all the World to try them that dwell on the Earth.* Here is another Benefit of Perſeverance, namely, God keeps and preſerves thoſe who keep his Word, who continue in it, and forſake not the Profeſſion and Practice of it. As they have been preſerved hitherto, ſo they need not fear God's Care of them for the future: He will recompenſe their paſt Integrity with a final and compleat Perſeverance; which Bleſſing is thus expreſſed in the 12th *v. Him that overcometh,* and continues ſtedfaſt, *will I make a Pillar in the Temple of my God, and he ſhall go no more out:* His former Conſtancy ſhall be rewarded with a never-failing Stedfaſtneſs to the End of his Days, he ſhall be fixed and ſtable as a Pillar, and no more ſubject to be moved. For God will guard and protect thoſe in a ſignal Manner who have been remarkable for their Faithfulneſs and Integrity. Such Perſons ſhall be kept *in an Hour of Temptation* (as was ſaid before) *i. e.* in a remarkable Time of Diſtreſs and Calamity they ſhall be ſafe under the Shadow of the Almighty, they ſhall be defended from thoſe Dangers and Evils which Apoſtates ſhall fall into. This ſhall be the Reward of their adhering to the Truth. For this Cauſe *hold faſt that which thou haſt*, ſaith Chriſt to this *Philadelphian* Church.

And he adds, *that no Man take thy Crown:* Where, according to the different Senſe of this Clauſe, there is a double Reaſon ſuggeſted, why we ſhould not apoſtatize from the Ways of God, but continue ſtedfaſt in them to the End. If by *Crown* be meant *Religion itſelf*, then we have Reaſon to *hold it faſt*, and to perſevere in it, becauſe it is a Thing of ſo excellent a Nature. It is our *Crown*, our *Dignity*, our *Glory*. It is the moſt choice and worthy Thing we can ſtrive for: Therefore let not our utmoſt Endeavours be wanting here, let us wade through all Difficulties and Hazards to this Crown. We muſt part with all to retain this, we muſt let all go to hold this faſt.

Or, we may underſtand this of the *Crown of Perſeverance*, and then the Senſe may be this, Hold that faſt which thou haſt, continue ſo ſtedfaſt and unſhaken in your Religion and in your Duty, that no Man may be able *to take your Crown from you*, i. e. to rob you of your *Conſtancy* and *Perſeverance*, for theſe are the *Crown* of a Chriſtian. And they are called ſo becauſe they are the conſummating of all, according to that known Maxim, the End *crowns* the Work, *i. e. accompliſheth* the whole Enterprize. As Princes think themſelves compleatly ſettled in the Throne, and fully inveſted with the Royal Power, when the Crown is ſet on their Heads, ſo Perſeverance is the Crown of all Graces, it is the Conſummation of a Chriſtian's Life. We muſt then be mindful to attain to this, or elſe all our former Attempts are inſignificant and to no purpoſe. Let no Man *take our Crown from us*, let us perſevere in all our Duties and Graces, for this is the compleating and finiſhing of them.

Again, Perſeverance is deſervedly called a *Crown*, becauſe it is this which entitles you to a *Crown of Glory*. It is in vain that we ſet out well at firſt, and run ſwiftly, if we reach not the End of the Race, and come up to the very Goal. We muſt *ſo run that we may obtain:* And we cannot obtain unleſs we hold out to the laſt. Then the *Crown* is held forth to us, then the *Prize* is given us. It is *Perſeverance* alone that ſets the Crown on our Heads, that gives us a Right to Heaven and Happineſs. Which is confirmed by thoſe Words of our Saviour in Luk. ix. 62. *No Man having put his Hand to the Plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of Heaven.* He that ſhrinks back from his Religion ſhall never enter into that Place of Bliſs and Glory. But on the contrary Chriſt aſſures us, that *he that endureth to the End, the ſame ſhall be ſaved*, Mat. xxiv. 13. So run the Conditions of Bleſſedneſs in *Rom.* ii. 6, 7. where the Apoſtle acquaints us that *to them who by patient Continuance in well-doing ſeek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality*, God will give *eternal Life.* To this Purpoſe are thoſe Words of Chriſt to the Church of *Smyrna*, Rev. ii. 10. *Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.* This is the *Crown* which *Perſeverance* helped them to. And the like is ſaid to the Church of *Thyatira*, in *ver.* 26 and 28. *He that keepeth my Works* unto the End, (this expreſſeth their *perſevering*) *to him will I give Power over the Nations, to him will I give the Morning-Star*, i. e. he ſhall be rewarded and bleſſed in an extraordinary manner: Whereas he ſhall neither be bleſſed here nor hereafter who keeps not Chriſt's Words and Works unto the End, *i.e.* who perſeveres not in Holineſs and virtuous Living. This may convince you of the *Benefit* and *Advantage* of this Duty. So that I need not inſiſt much on the

SECOND Thing I offered to you, *viz.* to ſhew the *Evil of Apoſtacy*; for from what hath been ſaid already *that* may ſufficiently appear. However, I will add a few Words concerning this, and firſt of the *Sinfulneſs* of it; which made the Prophet *Jeremiah* ſpeak after this dreadful manner in chap. ii. ver. 12, 13. *Be aſtoniſhed, O ye Heavens, at this, and be ye horribly afraid, be ye very deſolate, ſaith the Lord, for my People have committed two Evils, they have forſaken the Fountain of living Waters, and hewed them out Ciſterns, broken Ciſterns, that can hold no Water.* And he upbraids that People thus in ver. 21. *I have planted thee a noble Vine, wholly a right Seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate Plant of a ſtrange Vine unto me?* As if he had ſaid, what greater Offence could you have been guilty of than this? What more aſtoniſhing and dreadful Crime could you be charged with than departing from God after ſuch Appearance which you made of ſerving and devoting yourſelves to him? You have forſaken your beſt Friend and Benefactor, you have ſhamefully and diſingenuouſly, baſely and unworthily rejected him who alone is able to do you good, and to confer Mercies upon you, and who, now being provoked, is the moſt deadly and implacable Enemy that you can have.

WHICH is the *ſecond Thing* to be conſidered, *viz.* (not only the *Sinfulneſs* but) the *Danger* of *Apoſtacy.* Mark therefore the Prophets Words in that forenamed Chapter, ver. 19. *Know and ſee that it is* not only *an Evil*, but *a bitter thing, that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God.* Where firſt I might take Notice of the Manner of the holy Stile; I could obſerve to you that *Apoſtacy* is expreſſed in Holy Scripture by *Bitterneſs*: as in *Deut.* xxix. 18. *Leſt there ſhould be among you a Root that beareth Gall and Wormwood*; which (if you conſult the Context) you will find is ſpoken of their turning from the true God to ſerve the Gods of other Nations: The higheſt Inſtance of Apoſtacy that can be. And I doubt not but the Author to the *Hebrews* (who was ſo well verſed in the Old Teſtament) alludes to this Place in the 12th Chap. of his Epiſtle, and the 15th ver. where he bids the Chriſtians *look diligently leſt any Man fail of the Grace of God*; *leſt any Root of Bitterneſs ſpringing up trouble them, and thereby many be defiled.* The Apoſtle explains *the Root of Bitterneſs* by *failing of the Grace of God.* And thus St. *Peter* told his name-ſake *Simon*, that he was *in the Gall of Bitterneſs* when he foreſaw his revolting Spirit, and knew that being falſe-hearted he would relinquiſh the Truth which he once profeſſed. And ſo the Prophet *Jeremy* might rightly ſay, that 'tis *a bitter thing* to forſake God, which may here denote the *bitter*, i. e. *the grievous and diſmal Effects* of Apoſtacy. Which he makes appear in this, that it is a Sin of that heinous Nature, that it can ſcarcely be forgiven: *Though thou waſh thee with Nitre, and take thee much Sope, yet thine Iniquity is marked before me, ſaith the Lord God*, ver. 22. The Spots are ſo foul that they can hardly be waſhed out, the Marks are ſo deep that they are almoſt indelible. Apoſtacy is near akin to the unpardonable Sin.

THIS is evident from that lively Deſcription of it which is given by the Apoſtle both in the 6th and 10th Chapters of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*. From thence it appears that this Sin in its own Nature leads to Impenitency and Unpardonableneſs. This is that which all Apoſtates may expect, and if at any time it happen otherwiſe, it is extraordinary. And truly you cannot imagine it to be otherwiſe if you ſeriouſly peruſe the 2 *Pet.* ii. 20, 21, 22.

WHAT this Apoſtle here pronounceth of Apoſtates, *viz.* that *the latter End is worſe with them than the Beginning*, is borrowed from our Lord and Saviour, who applies theſe Words on the like Occaſion in his Parable in *Mat.* xii. 45. where he tells us that *the unclean Spirit that goes out of a Man brings with him ſeven other Spirits more wicked than himſelf, and enters in and dwells there, and the laſt State of that Man is worſe than the firſt.* Thoſe that have had ſome Taſte of Religion and Godlineſs, and made Profeſſion of it, but afterwards fall away, are generally ſeven times more deviliſh than thoſe that never arrived to any Senſe of Goodneſs and Virtue. Water once ſet on the Fire, and then expoſed to the open Air, will freeze harder than Water that was never warmed. It is certain that thoſe who have been once enlightned and warmed by the Gift of God, and afterwards return to their former Coldneſs, do not only retain that but a greater Meaſure of it, and are obſerved to be more than ordinarily hardned and frozen in their Sins. But this cannot be better deciphered than in the Words of the Author to the *Hebrews*, *chap.* vi. *v.* 4. to the 9th, (with which I will conclude this Particular). *It is impoſſible for thoſe who were once enlightned and have taſted of the heavenly Gift, and were made Partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, and have taſted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come; if they ſhall fall away, to renew them again unto Repentance: ſeeing they crucifie to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, and put him to an open ſhame. For the Earth which drinketh in the Rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth Herbs meet for them by whom it is dreſſed, receiveth Bleſſing from God: But that which beareth Thorns and Briars is rejected, and is nigh unto curſing, whoſe End is to be burned.*

WHICH laſt Clauſe reminds me of *other* bitter Fruits and Conſequences of Apoſtacy. They that fall away are *nigh unto curſing, and their End is to be burned.* They are curſed here, they ſhall be burnt hereafter. God loaths an Apoſtate, and he will diſcover it by inflicting all manner of Evil and Miſchief on him. *Lot's* Wife, who would needs be looking back unto *Sodom*, was turned into a Pillar of Salt, and made an Example of divine Vengeance to all Ages. The *Iſraelites*, who being delivered out of the Hands of the *Egyptians*, and on their Journey towards *Canaan*, yet murmured at *Moſes's* Conduct, and would needs go back again to *Egypt*, juſtly forfeited the Land of Promiſe, and fell in the Wilderneſs, and became the Inſtances of God's extreme Diſpleaſure and Indignation. Obſerve what Chriſt ſaith in *Mat.* v. 13. *Ye are the Salt of the Earth, but if the Salt hath loſt is ſavour, wherewith ſhall it be ſalted? It is therefore good for nothing, but to be caſt out.* That is, as it is with a Body wherein Salt is, if that Body loſeth its Salt, hath its ſaline Parts extracted out of it, it becomes inſipid, it is henceforth *terra damnata*, it is to be rejected and trodden under foot as a Thing altogether uſeleſs. So if thoſe who profeſs Godlineſs, and have ſome Savour and Reliſh of it, afterwards wilfully loſe it, they are juſtly caſt out by God, and abhorred by him. Yea, oftentimes they are abhorred of themſelves, they are their own Tormentors, and like *Francis Spira* die deſperately, deſcending into Hell with Curſes in their Mouths, not only againſt God, but their own Souls. This is the Fruit of revolting: *Drawing back* ends in *Perdition*, as the Apoſtle ſuggeſts in *Heb.* x. laſt Verſe.

REMEMBER then, I beſeech you, what befals Apoſtates, remember how *bitter a thing* it is to forſake God. Alledge not your former Strictneſs and Severity of Life: Know that theſe do but enhance and aggravate your Guilt. All your paſt Enterprizes and Endeavours are forgotten, all your former Performances are inſignificant. Seriouſly conſider this, that you may thereby prevent your falling away. All your former Praying and Faſting, hearing of Sermons, receiving of the holy Sacrament, giving of Alms, talking religiouſly, living juſtly, ſoberly, and godlily, will avail you nothing, if ye wilfully turn from God and abandon his Ways. This is the very thing which God ſpoke by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, Chap. xviii. Ver. 24. *When the righteous*, &c.

All his former Works profit him nothing, becauſe though *he began in the ſpirit, he ended in the fleſh*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Gal.* iii. 3. All his foregoing Labour and Services are loſt becauſe he relapſeth. He loſeth the Race becauſe he runs not to the End. What Good doth the Huſbandman get by that Corn which flouriſhed and thrived when it was in the Blade, but afterwards when the time of Harveſt approached, and the Sickle ſhould be put into it, was blaſted? What Comfort is it to the Vine-dreſſer to have his Vines loaded with Grapes when they are green, but when the time of Gathering comes, to ſee them laid waſt? In like manner, what is a Man profited though he begins well and brings forth ſome Fruits of Righteouſneſs, if the Cloſe and Period of his Life be not proportionable to it? You ſee then, from all that hath been ſaid, *on what Accounts* you are obliged to *hold faſt what you have*, and not to abandon your Religion either in Principle or Practice, which was the firſt Thing I undertook to ſhew you.

I will only here adjoin two *Inferences* from the Premiſes, and ſo paſs to the next thing I propounded.

1. This Doctrine condemns the groſs Error of the *Gnoſticks* of old, who profeſs'd it lawful to renounce Chriſt in Time of Perſecution. And it is probable that thoſe frequent Admonitions in the *Apoſtles Epiſtles* to *continue ſtedfaſt in the faith*, and the like, were occaſioned by the wicked Tenent of thoſe Hereticks, who had their firſt Riſe in thoſe Times. The Apoſtles found Reaſon to treat on this Theme ſo often, that they might thereby obviate the Perſwaſion and Practice of thoſe Men, who * held it an indifferent Thing to face about in Time of Danger, to revolt from the Faith, and to ſacrifice to Idols. They would not own a perſecuted Cauſe, a crucified Chriſt; therefore, ſaith the learned Dr. *Hammond*, they are called *enemies of the Croſs of Chriſt*, Phil. iii. 18.

* Euſeb. *Eccl. Hiſt.* *l.* 4. *c.* 3.

2*dly*. This Doctrine condemns the Apoſtacy of theſe Times we live in. God's Complaint of the *Iſraelites*, that † *they were gone away backward*, may be renewed concerning us. It may be ſaid of *England* as well as *Epheſus*, *Thou haſt left thy firſt love*, Rev. ii. 4. How many amongſt us have remitted their ardent Love and Zeal which they had at firſt for Chriſt and the Goſpel? How many in this laſt Age having once let go the Form of ſound Words, have abandoned the good old Way, Chriſt's holy Inſtitutions and Ordinances, and have paſſed through all Perſwaſions, Errors, and Deluſions, and run into all Sorts of Sects and Hereſies, and as tired at laſt have ſate down in Atheiſm and Prophaneſs, or at leaſt in a luke-warm Indifferency and Neutrality? The Doctrine then I am treating of is neceſſary in our Age, wherein there are ſo many Backſliders, wherein ſo great Numbers of Men daily fall from Truth and Holineſs. That we may prevent *others* from following their Example, and that we may reduce *theſe*, if it be poſſible, to their former State, I will proceed to the next Work which I undertook.

† *Iſa.* i. 4.

II. I am now to offer to you the moſt *effectual Helps* to Perſeverance, and together with them to let you know what are the moſt ſovereign Antidotes againſt Apoſtacy.

1. The firſt effectual Help is *ſerious Deliberation* and *Choice*. For it is certain that this is one Cauſe of Apoſtacy that Men do not ſit down and conſider before they enter into Religion. They take up the Principles and Practice of Religion too haſtily; and ſo it is no wonder that as they raſhly took them up, they as ſuddenly lay them down. Theſe Men ſet out too faſt: Hence it is that they do not hold out according to their Beginning. Thoſe Fruits that are ſo ſoon ripe are obſerved to periſh as quickly. But the Man that takes up Religion with Deliberation and ſober Advice, is like to find the Event of theſe to be a conſtant holding faſt of what he hath. He that eſpouſeth Religion with Choice and Conſideration will never be divorced from it. It was *David*'s Petition in *Pſal.* li. 12. *Uphold me with thy free ſpirit.* There is no *upholding*, i. e. no Conſtancy and Perſeverance in Religion where this *free Spirit* is wanting. *David* therefore prays for this as the proper Means whereby he may be upheld, and at length arrive to a fix'd and unmovable State. The old Aphoriſm is true here, Nothing that is violent laſts long. Force a Stone upwards with never ſo great Strength, yet you ſhall ſoon ſee it fall down again. Let Water receive never ſo many Degrees of Heat, yet remove it from the Fire, and it will return to its

former Coldneſs. This is applicable to the Temper and Diſpoſition of Men's Minds, and to the Actions proceeding from them. He that doth any good Action with an Ill-will, will not long continue to do that Action. Religion muſt be of choice, elſe it will not be durable. Sit down then and ponder what you do. See that you deliberate in ſo great and weighty a Matter as this is.

And to this purpoſe furniſh yourſelves with a ſufficient Stock of Knowledge; for this will help to preſerve you from falling away, according to that of *Solomon*, *Underſtanding ſhall keep thee, to deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that ſpeaketh froward things: who leave the paths of uprightneſs, to walk in the ways of darkneſs*, Prov. ii. 11, 12. They are the *Ignorant* and *Novices* that uſually *leave the paths of uprightneſs*: but it is *Underſtanding* that *keeps* and upholds us, and will not ſuffer us to wander into the *Ways of Darkneſs*, i. e. of Error and Vice. It concerns you therefore to ſtock yourſelves with ſound Principles, to ballance your Ship with the Knowledge of ſolid Truths, to lay a good Foundation, throughly to underſtand the Articles of Faith which you rehearſe, to be well acquainted with the Grounds of your Religion, to *know whom you have believed*, as the Apoſtle did, 2 *Tim.* i. 12. In ſhort, would you perſevere in Truth and Righteouſneſs, then act like conſiderate Perſons, weigh the Arguments which induce you either to believe or to practice. Act like *Men*, that is, Maſters of true Reaſon, that you may be *Chriſtians*, that is, conſtant Adherers to the true Faith. Let Religion be founded in ſerious Conſideration and Choice, and then you will not bid farewel to it in evil Times, when you come to be tried: Then you will not ſhrink and fall back, and like ill-built Ships ſink in the Launching. Make not a Profeſſion of Chriſtianity becauſe you ſee it may prove advantageous to you at preſent, becauſe it may promote your ſecular Intereſt and Profit, but becauſe you are inwardly perſwaded of the Worth and Excellency of it. Thus being ſettled on true and right Principles, like a Pillar ſet ſtrait and even upon its Baſis, you will ſtand firm and unſhaken.

2. That you may do ſo, carefully look to your *Hearts*, for thence is the Riſe of all your Backſliding. Our corrupt Nature came from the firſt *Apoſtate*, and by that we are inclined to be like him, that is, to fall away and renounce our Integrity. It is our in-bred Corruption that promotes Apoſtacy. This Traitor within our Breaſts, the Luſt that wars within our Members, betrays us to this vile Miſcarriage * *We are drawn away of our own luſts, and enticed*, as St. *James* ſaith: We deſert our Profeſſion and leave our Duty, becauſe we attend to the Suggeſtions of our evil Hearts, which † *are deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked.* And though it is added by the Prophet, *Who can know them?* yet that doth not denote the utter Impoſſibility (although it ſpeaks the great Difficulty) of finding out the inward Corruptions that lodge there. Wherefore our Buſineſs ſhould be to ſearch and enquire into them with great Diligence, according to that of the wiſe Man, *Keep thy heart with all diligence*, obſerve all its Motions, and take all the Care imaginable to be acquainted with its particular Inclinations and Propenſions. There ever will be ſome Reliques of Luſt and evil Deſires in us, but they muſt be weakened and leſſened by continual Acts of Self-denial and Mortification: Theſe muſt be exerted till the laſt Minute of our Lives.

* *Jam.* i. 14.
† *Jer.* xvii. 9.

But now forthwith you muſt take care of this, that you baniſh all *Hypocriſy* from your Hearts. Though the remainder of Luſt and Corruption cannot be ſubdued of a ſudden, yet you muſt be *ſincere* in your Endeavours to ſuppreſs them, and that ſpeedily. What you can do in Religion, though it be never ſo weak and mean, do it heartily. Diſſemble not with God or Men, for this is undeniably true, that Diſſimulation, if it be foſter'd, will certainly end in Apoſtacy. Therefore St. *James* lets us know that *a double-minded man is unſtable in all his ways*, Jam. i. 8. The latter is the conſequent of the former. Be careful then to ſhun Hypocriſy. Take not up Religion for ſiniſter Ends and Reſpects, that is, for Credit and Reputation, or for Gain and Profit, or any the like Conſiderations. If you do ſo, you will ſoon fall away when your Credit or Gain, and ſuch like Things fail you. Know this that Hypocriſy is no good Bottom, yea, it is a rotten one; therefore whatever you build upon it will fall down. Believe it as an experimental Truth that he will ſoon relinquiſh his Religion who did not at firſt cordially embrace it, for the Baſis whereon true Virtue ſtands is Sincerity. This will reconcile all Hardſhips to us which we meet with in the

Way of Holineſs, this will keep us upright and entire amidſt all the Enticements and Inveiglements of this vain World, this will guard and defend us againſt all Temptations and Aſſaults of the evil Spirit.

CREATE in me a clean Heart, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *and renew a right* (a firm, a *conſtant) Spirit within me,* (as the Margin of your Bibles renders it) *Pſal.* li. 10. The latter doth ever ſuppoſe the former, and therefore they are well placed in this Order. It is impoſſible there ſhould be any Conſtancy and Perſeverance in Goodneſs where the Heart is not firſt purified and cleanſed. Without this there may be ſome ſhort Fits and Qualms of Religion, but not the conſtant and laſting Exerciſe of a holy Life. Purity is the Root and Principle of Stedfaſtneſs: And Conſtancy naturally follows and is neceſſarily join'd with Cleaneſs of Heart. And this is the Reflection which the great *Eraſmus* makes upon the Order of the Pſalmiſt's Words, * "That invincible Vigour of Spirit, ſaith he, proceeds from "Sincerity of Heart." That a holy Man is ſo lively and active, ſo inceſſant and perſevering in his Proſecution of Virtue, ariſes hence, that he hath attained to Truth and Uprightneſs of Soul. Therefore ſaith the ſame holy Man, *Let Integrity and Uprightneſs preſerve me,* Pſal. xxv. 21. And the Holy Apoſtle offers this Direction in *Eph.* vi. 14. *Stand, having your Loins girt about with Truth,* i. e. with Sincerity and True-heartedneſs.

* *Invectus vigor ſpiritûs è cordis ſinceritate naſcitur.*

HERE then muſt be our great Care: If we deſire to be *preſerv'd,* if we deſire to *ſtand,* we muſt guard our Hearts, and root out all Diſſimulation and Hypocriſy. We muſt ſuffer no Sin to lurk in our Souls unrepented of, we muſt not entertain the leaſt ſecret Vice: For this (if Occaſion be offer'd) will make us quit our Profeſſion and Practice of Holineſs. This *Dalilah* imbraced will bereave us of all our Strength: One beloved Luſt will make us ſurrender up all our Religion. It is neceſſary then, if you be deſirous to be of the Number of thoſe who continue ſtedfaſt in the Faith, to purge your Hearts from the Love of all Sin, and in order to that to be truly convinced of the real and intrinſick Evil of it, and of the innate and inſeparable Goodneſs of all Virtue and Holineſs. If you attain to this Conviction, you are in the right way to Perſeverance: For then, if the Pleaſures of Sin preſent themſelves to you, you will ſoon caſt them off, becauſe you are ſenſible that Grace is the greateſt Good; and if Sufferings and Perſecutions befal you, you will chearfully bear them, becauſe you are fully perſwaded that Sin is the greateſt Evil and Puniſhment that you undergo.

3. THAT you may hold faſt that which you have, and not revolt from God and his Ways, ſee that you be very *humble.* Unleſs you lay your Foundation low, that is, in a profound Humility, your Fabrick will not ſtand long. The want of this hath made many a Building to totter: They have not laid their Baſis deep enough, and thence all the Superſtructure hath fallen down. They had no *Root,* and therefore like the ſecond Sort of *Ground* you read of in the Parable, they fell away. To prevent this Apoſtacy, follow St. *Peter*'s Direction in his *Ep.* 1. *ch.* v. *ver.* 6. *Humble yourſelves under the mighty Hand of God.* Begin with Mourning and Contrition, debaſe yourſelves before the moſt High. Let the Senſe of your Sins make you fall down and lie in the Duſt. Teſtify your Humiliation and Abaſement by Sighs and Groans, by doleful Lamentations and Outcries. Be throughly apprehenſive of your wretched Condition which you have plunged yourſelves into by your wilful Miſcarriages, and likewiſe of the utter Impoſſibility of your reſcuing and relieving yourſelves by any thing that you can do. Thus be vile and baſe in your own Eyes, and live in a continual Senſe of your Frailties and Infirmities, of your Weakneſſes and Imperfections, of your daily Offences and Provocations, and hereby you will gain Strength, and find your ſpiritual Life and Vigour increas'd.

BUT never give way to Confidence and Preſumption, indulge not Pride and Arrogance, for theſe will weaken and diſable you, and in a ſhort time cauſe you to backſlide. *Peter* in a vaunting Manner bragg'd that he would not forſake his Maſter, but ſtand firm to him whatever ſhould happen: Yea, he confidently perſwaded himſelf that he ſhould ſtand when all the reſt of the Apoſtles fell away; though all ſhould deny Chriſt, he be ſure would not, he reſolv'd to be firm and faithful to him whatever happen'd. And indeed he ventur'd bravely when he drew the Sword in his Maſter's Quarrel. I but how ſoon was his Edge blunted and rebated? Or rather the Point of it was turn'd againſt his Maſter, he like a falſe Coward denied him ſhamefully. For the Evangeliſts tell us that he was the firſt who forſook him, and that with bitter Oaths and Curſes he diſown'd his Lord. So great Reaſon have we to be modeſt and humble, to baniſh Self-Conceit and a haughty Spirit, to ſay with St. *Paul*, *By the Grace of God we are what we are.* This is the way to prevent Apoſtacy: But on the contrary we are told by an inſpired Author, that *Pride goeth before Deſtruction, and a haughty Spirit before a Fall*, Prov. xvi. 18. *Spiritual Pride* is the worſt, and the *Fall* that accompanies it is the worſt alſo. Therefore demean yourſelves humbly and meekly, by no Means arrogate to yourſelves, be not proud of any thing you have, remembring that in 1 *Pet.* v. 5. *God reſiſteth the Proud, but giveth Grace to the Humble*, yea and he *continues* Grace to them: They ſhall be bleſſed with Perſeverance.

4. To Humility you muſt not forget to join *Fearfulneſs*, according to that of the Apoſtle, *Be not high-minded, but fear.* Fear is an Oppoſite to Pride, but it is the Friend and Aſſociate of Humility, and it is one of the greateſt Helps to Perſeverance. Nouriſh then a due Fear and Awe: Be afraid of falling away, and that is one Means to prevent it. Bear that of *Solomon* in your Minds, *Prov.* xxviii. 14. *Happy is the Man who feareth always: But he that hardneth his Heart* (who is Self-confident and void of Fear) *ſhall fall into Miſchief.* I do not ſpeak of ſuch a Fear as is accompanied with Cowardice, for that is one great Spring of Apoſtacy; but the Fear which is the true Antidote againſt this is ſuch a religious Awe upon our Minds, whereby we are ſenſible of our own Inability to ſtand, and therefore we are wary and cautious, and ſhew that we are ſo in all the Actions of our Lives. But of this I have largely ſpoken in another Place, and therefore diſmiſs it.

5. Are you deſirous to perſevere, and continue to the End in the Ways of Truth and Holineſs? Then ſee that your Affections be not immoderately carried out towards this World. It is eaſy to obſerve that many of thoſe who have apoſtatized from the Faith, have firſt polluted themſelves with the inordinate Love of the Things of this Life. A known Inſtance is that of *Demas:* In one Epiſtle you read, * *Demas greeteth you*, in another, † *Demas hath forſaken me.* Would you know the Reaſon of this Change? It is this: *Demas* forſook St. *Paul* and the Goſpel together becauſe he *loved this preſent World*, and the Profits of it. Before him was *Judas* the Traytor and Apoſtate, whoſe *Avarice* caus'd his Defection, as may be learnt from his Words to the High-Prieſts, *What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you?* Mat. xxvi. 15. It was the thirty Shekels that made him a Renegade. And the *World's Pleaſures* have the ſame Effect, as was plainly ſeen in *Solomon*, whoſe Wives and Concubines turn'd away his Heart after other Gods, 1 *Kings* xi. 4. The ſame may be truly pronounced of the *Honours* and *Preferments* of the World; theſe too often turn Men's Hearts from God and Religion. This then is that which you are to take Care of, that you be not debauch'd and perverted by the Riches, Delights, and Honours of this World. Remember how the third *Ground* in the Parable miſcarried, *Luke* viii. 14. *It was choaked with Cares and Riches, and Pleaſures of this Life, and ſo brought no Fruit to Perfection.*

* Col. iv. 14.
† 2 Tim. iv. 10.

What Admonition therefore can be more ſeaſonable than that of St. *John* the Divine Amoriſt? *Love not the World, neither the Things in the World, for if any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.* And where this latter Love is wanting, expect no Perſeverance, as will appear afterwards from the ſeventh Particular. The ſame Holy Writer ſums up in the next Verſe the Inventory of the whole World, *viz. The Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life*, i. e. in plainer Terms the Things before-mentioned, Pleaſures, Honours, Wealth. Set not your Affections on any of theſe, value not, love not, purſue not any of them immoderately, for if you be ſo unwiſe as to be guilty of Fondneſs and Paſſion here, you will never be able to keep your Ground, you will ſhamefully retreat and fly back, you will be Fugitives from Religion and a good Conſcience, without Remedy.

6. That you may not be of this Number, fix and eſtabliſh yourſelves by *Faith. Thou ſtandeſt by Faith*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* xi. 12. This Grace is an eſtabliſhing, confirming, ſtrengthning Grace: And as long as we maintain this, we ſhall never fall away. *I have truſted in the Lord, therefore I ſhall not ſlide*, ſaith

the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* xxvi. 1. If we follow the Example of this holy Man, and firmly rely and truſt in God, our Feet ſhall be preſerv'd from ſliding, our Steps ſhall be eſtabliſh'd in the Ways of Godlineſs. But on the contrary, know this, that *Unbelief* is one grand Cauſe of Apoſtacy: Which was the Occaſion of that Caution given by the Apoſtle in *Heb.* iii. 12. *Take heed leſt there be in any of you an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the living God:* Where it is ſufficiently intimated, that departing from God hath its Riſe from *Unbelief.* You may take Notice therefore, that in *Heb.* x. 38, 39. *Belief* and *living by Faith* are oppoſed to *drawing back*, to let us know the Tendency that *Faith* hath to *Perſeverance*, and that *Unbelief* hath to *falling away**. Such as your Faith is, ſuch is your Fortitude: Therefore endeavour to attain great Meaſures of this, that you may with undaunted Valour withſtand the Temptations of the evil Spirit, and keep your Station when he is moſt deſirous to put you to Flight. *Be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might*, Eph. vi. 10. Acknowledge his Conduct, depend on his Strength, and you are ſafe. Cleave to the Rock of Ages, and you ſhall ſtand immovable: Rely on him, and you ſhall be upheld: Depend on his Promiſes, and you ſhall never fall. Particularly ſtrengthen your Faith in the gracious *Promiſes of Perſeverance*, which you will find often repeated in the Book of God. *David* aſſureth us in the very Entrance of his Book of *Pſalms*, that a godly Man is a † *Tree whoſe Leaf fadeth not.* And he aſcertains us in another ** Place, that *The Steps of a good Man are order'd* (or, as the *Hebrew* will bear it, *eſtabliſhed*) *by the Lord: Though he fall* (for a time) *he ſhall not be utterly caſt down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his Hand.* And again, in *Pſal.* xcii. 13, 14. *They that be planted in the Houſe of the Lord ſhall ſtill bring forth Fruit in old Age.* And that Promiſe in *Iſai.* xl. 31. is to the ſame Effect; *They that wait upon the Lord ſhall renew their Strength: They ſhall mount up with Wings as Eagles, they ſhall run and not be weary, they ſhall walk and not faint.* Support your Faith with theſe precious Promiſes, and then your Faith will ſupport and uphold you. You may (with the Apoſtle *Phil.* i. 6.) *be confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good Work in you will perform* (and finiſh) *it until the Day of Jeſus Chriſt.* Fix your Eyes then on *Jeſus*, who is not only the Author but the Finiſher of your Faith and all other Graces. I will conclude this Particular with the Apoſtle's Exhortation in 2 *Tim.* i. 13. *Hold faſt the Form of ſound Words which thou haſt heard* (i. e. be ſtedfaſt and unmovable in your Religion) *in Faith and Love which is in Chriſt Jeſus.* Which latter Clauſe acquaints us by what Means we may hold faſt and perſevere, namely, *in* or *by Faith* in God, and likewiſe by *Love* towards him, which is the next thing I am to ſpeak of.

7. THAT you may never turn Apoſtates and Revolters, entertain a *Love of God* and *Goodneſs* in your Breaſts. It muſt be imputed to the want of this that ſo many in all Ages have forſaken the Ways of Righteouſneſs, though they knew them to be holy, juſt and good. This is the Reaſon why their religious Undertakings and Actions have proved ſo ſhort and tranſitory, ſo fickle and inconſtant, why their Righteouſneſs hath been like the Morning-dew which ſoon vaniſheth away. *Ahab* put on Sackcloth, and mourned, and humbled himſelf, and ſeemed to be a very religious Penitent, but he remained not long in this Poſture, becauſe it proceeded not from an inward Love of that which is good. *Jehoaſh* ‖ did that which was right in the Sight of the Lord all the Days of *Jehoiada* the Prieſt, who by his Preſence and Council awed that King: But no ſooner was *Jehoiada* dead, but *Jehoaſh* became extremely wicked, inſomuch that (as the ſacred Story tells us) the Princes of *Judah* prevailed with him to leave the Houſe of the Lord, and to repair to the Groves where the Idol-Gods were worſhipped. This was one Reaſon without doubt why he perſevered not in the Way which he began to walk in, namely, becauſe his Actions ſprang not from the free Principle of Love. *Herod* heard *John Baptiſt* gladly, and did many Things, ſaith St. * *Mark*, but he adds withal, that that great Man *feared John*, knowing he was a juſt Man and a holy. This Principle of *Fear* could not effect any great Matters, and therefore you read, that afterwards he yielded to the beheading of that good Man: Whereas had he been acted by *Love*, he would not only have heard him, and done many Things, but he would have perſevered in hearing and doing. St. *Paul* having foretold the *Theſſalonians* that there ſhould ‡ *come a falling away*, and proceeding afterwards to decypher thoſe Perſons who ſhould be the Ring-leaders

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* *Qualis fides, talis fortitudo.* Eraſm. in Pſal. li. 10.

† Pſal. i. 3.

** Pſal. xxxvii. 23.

‖ 2 Kings xii. 2.

* Chap. vi. 20.

‡ 1 Theſſ. ii. 3.

of this Apoſtacy, and to render a Reaſon of their falling away, he aſſigns this, † *Becauſe they received not the Love of the Truth:* Yea, he adds, ** *they had Pleaſure in Unrighteouſneſs.* This is one Cauſe of their ſhameful deſerting the Chriſtian Profeſſion. Though they ſeemed to promiſe fair at firſt, though they made a great Shew of Religion, though many good and praiſe-worthy Acts were done by them, yet they ſoon ſtarted back like a broken Bow, becauſe what they did proceeded not from Love, they were not really affected with the Senſe of Goodneſs, they felt not an inward Complacency in Virtue and Religion, and therefore it was that they apoſtatized.

† Ver. 10.
** Ver. 12.

JOSHUA therefore, when he was exhorting the *Iſraelites* to perſevere in their ſerving and obeying of God, and not to turn aſide to the Nations which were driven out before them, very pertinently and ſeaſonably tender'd this Advice to them, * *Take good heed to yourſelves that ye Love the Lord your God.* As much as to ſay, This will be an effectual Preſervative againſt your falling away. And St. *Paul*'s Advice to his *Theſſalonians* was very proper and apposite, † *The Lord make you to increaſe and abound in Love, to the end he may ſtabliſh your Hearts unblamable in Holineſs before God.* *Love* as well as *Faith* is an eſtabliſhing Grace. Therefore St. *Jude* had reaſon to ſpeak thus to the Chriſtians of his Days, ‖ *Keep yourſelves in the Love of God:* Which he preſcribeth as one Help to preſerve them from being ſeduced by falſe Teachers and Apoſtates. If they would be ſtedfaſt in their Religion, they muſt embrace it out of Love. This cauſed the Holy Martyrs to hug the Stake, to court the Flames, to ſubmit themſelves to all Torments whatſoever. They had firſt heartily eſpouſed the Cauſe of Chriſt, and then nothing could make them relinquiſh it. They loved Chriſtianity, and were pleaſed with its excellent Principles, and then it is no wonder that they died for the Defence of it. An affectionate Senſe of Goodneſs on their Minds enabled them to perſevere in the Profeſſion of the Truth, and to maintain and aſſert it maugre all Oppoſition. The ſame noble Principle will have the ſame Effect in you. If you be called to ſuffer, it will make you firmly adhere to the Truth. For as *many Waters cannot quench* this *Love, neither can the Floods drown it,* ſo neither can the hotteſt Flames conſume it. Therefore I ſay unto you, entirely *love* Truth and Holineſs, and you will *hold them faſt.*

* Joſ. xxiii. 11.
† 1 Theſſ. iii. 12, 13.
‖ Ver. 21.

8. In order to Perſeverance be careful to nouriſh *a patient* and *reſigning Temper of Mind:* Always endeavour to ſurrender yourſelves wholly to the divine Will and Pleaſure, ſaying, Not our Will, but thy Will be done. If God ſhall think good to exerciſe us with Sufferings, let us remember how reaſonable it is that we ſhould bear them with a contented Mind. For we are not our own, but muſt be diſpoſed off by him who hath right to us both by creating and by redeeming us. What then though the Cup which is given us to drink be bitter? Let us learn to ſweeten it with the Blood of Jeſus, who patiently ſuffered an ignominious and painful Death on the Croſs for us, and who earneſtly calls to us to deny ourſelves, and to take up our Croſs, and follow him. And ſhall we not follow our Lord with Chearfulneſs and Rejoicing? Shall we not count it honourable to tread in his Steps? The holy Apoſtles, Martyrs and Confeſſors in ſucceeding Ages did ſo; and we have the ſame Reaſon to do the like. We have as good, nay, we have the ſame Cauſe to defend that they had, and we may expect the like Aſſiſtances that they had.

Call to Mind what * St. *Peter* ſaith, *If ye ſuffer for Righteouſneſs ſake, happy are ye.* And he adds, † *Be not afraid of their Terror, neither be troubled, but ſanctify the Lord in your Hearts, and be ready always to give an Anſwer to every Man that asketh you a Reaſon of the Hope that is in you.* That is, let not the Fear of Man and what he can do unto you hinder you from a free and open Profeſſion of your Faith and Religion; be not aſham'd of the Goſpel, which is your Glory. You may chear and animate yourſelves with the Thoughts of that infinite Reward which awaiteth you, that Crown of Life which is aſſured to all thoſe that ſuffer for the Sake of Jeſus. Let the Conſideration of this inſpire you with Courage and Reſolution, and let nothing divert you from taking up the Croſs, and laying down your Lives, if your Lord ſhall call you to it. ***You have need of Patience,* as the Author to the *Hebrews* ſaith, therefore cheriſh this excellent Grace. Give yourſelves up wholly to God's Diſpoſal, reſign yourſelves into his Hands, and reckon upon this, that if you can't *ſuffer,* you are not like to *perſevere:* Without Patience you will not be able to hold faſt the Faith when cruel Men endeavour to pluck

* 1 Pet. iii. 14.
† Ver. 15.
** Heb. x. 36.

pluck it from you by Force. You will not remain ſtedfaſt in the Cauſe of Chriſt when you are threatned with Fire and Fagot, yea, when you actually feel theſe.

9. *GROW in Grace*, ſtrive for the utmoſt Attainments in Chriſtianity: For this likewiſe is an approved Remedy againſt *Apoſtacy*. You may obſerve in the Lives of Men, they do not increaſe in Virtue and Goodneſs, and thence they inſenſibly decreaſe: Not advancing forward, they run backward, for Non-proficiency is the direct way to Apoſtacy. He that ceaſes to grow better, waxeth worſe. See then that you caſt off all Slothfulneſs and Remiſneſs, and remember that conſtant Endeavours and the continual Exerciſe of Chriſtian Graces are the Conditions of Perſeverance. Be diligent then to improve your Graces, and to make Acceſſions to what you have. *I put thee in Remembrance*, ſaith St. *Paul* to *Timothy*, *that thou ſtir up the Gift of God which is in thee*, that thou blow up that Fire which is ready to go out, as the * *Greek* Word here uſed properly ſignifieth. The holy Fire which glows in the Breaſts of good Men is ſubject to cool and decay, and therefore it is requiſite that by conſtant Excitements it be kept up and recruited. Careleſneſs and Remiſneſs are the Cauſe of decaying in Religion; therefore rouze yourſelves, and ſtir up the Gifts and Graces of God in you. Be very active and vigorous, and think not of ſitting ſtill all the time of your journeying towards Heaven; then you are ſure of perſevering. But having ſpoken of this when I treated of *Growth in Grace*, I will ſay no more of it, but paſs to the next Head, wherein I ſhall be more large.

* ἀναζωπυρεῖν.

10. THAT you may continue and perſevere in all Holineſs, take care that thoſe *Means*, thoſe *Inſtitutions*, thoſe *Ordinances*, which were appointed for this Purpoſe, be not neglected by you. The firſt that I ſhall mention is *Prayer*. This indeed is ſerviceable to all holy Purpoſes, and therefore is to be uſed as a ſtanding Means for the promoting of every good Work in us, but more eſpecially it is to be made uſe of in order to *Perſeverance*. For ſeeing it is God only that can uphold and eſtabliſh us, and ſeeing it is by Prayer that we fly to him, renouncing our own Strength and Ability, this muſt needs be a very proper Inſtrument of furthering the Continuance of Grace in us. St. *John* ſpeaking of ſeducing Apoſtates, who *went out from* the true Chriſtians, comforteth theſe latter by telling them that † *they have an Unction from the holy One*, by whoſe Help they ſhall eſcape the Seductions of Apoſtates. The divine Aſſiſtance of this holy One we muſt crave with all Earneſtneſs, if we deſire to be kept from falling away. Beg the Aid of the Spirit of Grace, who alone can ſecure your Steps: Always be ſolliciting the Divine Power and Goodneſs to preſerve you, imitating the Example of Holy *David*, who thus prayeth in *Pſal.* cxix. 112. *Incline my Heart to do thy Will always, even to the End.* And he calls for this eſtabliſhing Spirit in *Pſal.* li. *Renew a right*, a conſtant *Spirit within me:* O God repair in me that which is decay'd by my late departing from thee, and for the future confirm and eſtabliſh me, that I may not any more fall from thee: Do thou uphold me, and then I ſhall ſtand. This royal Prophet requeſteth a *right Spirit*, that is, (ſaith *Eraſmus*) ‖ a Spirit unbroken and upright againſt all the ſubtle Attempts of Satan; he prays for Strength to encounter that ghoſtly Enemy, he deſires that he may be enabled to reſiſt his Fury, to enervate his Force, to baffle all his Wiles and Stratagems, and to ſtand firm and unſhaken notwithſtanding all his malicious Aſſaults. St. *Jude* in his Epiſtle acquaints thoſe whom he writ to, that they muſt be kept from the Deceits of falſe Teachers and the Deluſions of Apoſtate-Spirits by the Aſſiſtance of the *holy Spirit*, and by *Prayers* to God. Hence he adviſeth them to *build up themſelves on their moſt holy Faith by praying in the Holy Ghoſt*, ver. 20.

† 1 John ii. 19, 20.

‖ *Adverſus omnes Satanæ machinas infractum & erectum.*

AFTER this Manner then make thy Addreſs to God, O thou eternal and never-failing Being! uphold me always by thy holy Spirit, that I may not by any Means be removed from my Stedfaſtneſs. Thou who *art able to keep me from falling, and to preſent me faultleſs before the Preſence of thy Glory*, do thou by thy good Work of Grace upon my Heart confirm and ſtrengthen me in all Holineſs, *fulfil all the good Pleaſure of thy Goodneſs, and the Work of Faith* and all other Graces *with Power* and Efficacy. *Grant me, according to the Riches of thy Glory, that I may be ſtrengthned with Might by thy Spirit in the inward Man.* Let me be *rooted and ſtabliſhed* in Truth and Holineſs, that *continuing ſtedfaſt to the End*, I may not fall ſhort of eternal Salvation. Thus make your conſtant and daily Petition at the

Throne of Grace, and God will certainly beſtow on you the Gift of Perſeverance. But remember that *Thankſgiving* is part of *Prayer:* Therefore be thankful to God for what you have, and by that Means you may derive a Bleſſing on you for the future, and may expect to have all your Graces confirmed. Remarkable to this Purpoſe is that of the Apoſtle in *Phil.* iv. 6, 7. *In every thing by Prayer and Supplication with Thankſgiving let your Requeſts be made known unto God: And the Peace of God, which paſſeth all Underſtanding, ſhall keep your Hearts and Minds through Jeſus Chriſt.* This you ſee is the Method to be uſed in order to your being *kept* and *preſerved.*

Again, It is neceſſary that you ſtudy the Holy Scriptures: For you may obſerve that when the Apoſtle had advertiſed *Timothy* of the *perillous Times* that were then to be expected, and that *evil Men and Seducers ſhould wax worſe and worſe, deceiving and being deceived,* he preſcribes this as an Antidote againſt his falling away in ſuch Times*, *Continue thou in the Things which thou haſt learned, and haſt been aſſured of, knowing of* whom *thou haſt learned them* (i. e. the inſpired Prophets of the Old Teſtament) *and that from a Child thou haſt known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wiſe unto Salvation.* Theſe ſacred Writings being *given by Inſpiration of God* (as he adds in the next Verſe) and therefore being infallible, are a firm Baſis for thee to ground thy Belief and Practice upon: Wherefore always conſult theſe, and rely upon them, and then thou wilt not be deluded by thoſe Deceivers that are coming abroad, and conſequently thou wilt not deſert the Faith, nor revolt from the Ways of Holineſs.

In the next Place, *hear* as well as *read.* Preaching of the Word of God was deſign'd for the ſtrengthning and eſtabliſhing of you. † *The Prieſt's Lips* keep *Knowledge:* Much more by the *evangelical Miniſtry* is Knowledge preſerv'd, Inſtruction is ſealed, and Religion confirmed. St. *Paul* taking his Farewel of the *Epheſians,* did it after this Manner, || *I commend you to God, and to the* Word *of his Grace, which is able to build you up.* If you duly attend to this Word of Grace diſplay'd in the Preaching of the Goſpel, if you lay it up in your Minds and Conſciences, you will find that it will exceedingly advance that *ſpiritual Building* which you are all concern'd in, it will help to finiſh that noble Structure of Faith and good Works, and effectually prevent its Downfal for ever.

Unto Praying, Reading, and Hearing, you muſt not forget to add that holy Inſtitution of the Goſpel which is by way of Eminence call'd *the Sacrament,* and which by Divines is peculiarly ſtiled a *confirming Ordinance.* Here you may expect, if you come prepared, to have your Graces wonderfully ſtrengthned and eſtabliſhed, and kept from decaying.

Next, you are to ſettle and fix yourſelves by Holy *Reſolution:* This doth great Wonders in Religion, eſpecially it is very ſerviceable towards the attaining of Perſeverance. Firmly *purpoſe* and *reſolve* by the Aſſiſtance of God to walk in his Ways, and you will plainly diſcern that this will help you to *continue ſtedfaſt* in them.

Let me add this likewiſe; Often conſult your own Experiences, reflect on what God hath done for you, what Influence his Grace hath in Times paſt had upon you, and how good and ſatisfying a holy Life is. It is ſaid that *Polycarp,* that ancient Chriſtian and Martyr, when he was urged to blaſpheme and defy Chriſt, utterly refuſed it (though it would have been much at that time for his ſecular Advantage) and alledg'd this Reaſon for it, “ Theſe Fourſcore and ſix “ Years, ſaith he, have I ſerved my Lord Chriſt, and he hath been a good Ma-“ ſter to me, how then can I forſake him now whom I have ſerv'd ſo long, and “ of whoſe Goodneſs I have had ſo long Experience?” When you are tempted to abandon Chriſt and deſert his Ways, ſpeak after the like Manner, and let his former Goodneſs to you engage you to perſiſt in your Duty to the End. Let your experimental Senſe of what is paſt eſtabliſh you in Religion for the future.

I will alſo adjoin this, Maintain Chriſtian Communion, and thereby you will prevent Apoſtacy. *Wo to him that is alone when he falleth,* ſaith the wiſe Man, *for he hath not another to help him up,* Eccl. iv. 10. You are ſubject to Lapſes and Failings, but by holding Commerce with pious Chriſtians, and conſtantly aſſociating with them, thoſe Lapſes will not prove very dangerous, becauſe thoſe kind Friends will be ready to give you their helping Hand, and to recover you. They will not ſuffer you to remain long in the Commiſſion of any Sin, but

* 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15.

† Mal. ii. 7.

|| Acts xx. 32.

but will lovingly admoniſh and reprove you, they will remind you of the great Danger you are in, they will ſhew you the way to eſcape it, and they will hinder you from falling into it any more. This is the Benefit of Holy Communion. Trees are ſecureſt when they are in a Wood or Grove; ſtanding together they ſhelter and defend one another. Thus Chriſtians are moſt ſafe when they are together, and by their mutual Offices of Love defend one another from Danger. To this Purpoſe the Connection of the Apoſtle's Words in *Heb.* iii. 12, 13. is obſervable. *Daily exhorting one another* is preſcrib'd here as a Remedy againſt *departing* and revolting *from the living God.* So likewiſe take Notice of the Dependance of thoſe Verſes in *Heb.* x. *viz.* 23, 24, 25. That they may perſevere (for no leſs certainly is meant by *holding faſt the Profeſſion of their Faith without wavering*) he adviſeth them to take this Courſe, namely, to *exhort and provoke one another* to Holineſs, and to that end *to aſſemble often together,* that thereby the Communion of Saints might be upheld. Make uſe then of the holy Council and Advice of your Brethren, be glad of their Chriſtian Aid and Aſſiſtance, for when you are ſlothful and heavy, they will rouze and ſtir you up: When you are fainting, they will chear you: When you are cold, they will warm you: When you are tending to a Defection, they will eſtabliſh you: When you are ſtarting back, they will bring you forward, and ſet you in your Way again. So much for the *proper Means* inſtituted and appointed in order to Perſeverance in Grace.

Laſtly, (To compriſe all in a word) Be ever *Watchful* and *Circumſpect,* if you would hold faſt what you have. This you will find to be the Apoſtle's Direction in 1 *Cor.* xvi. 13. *Watch ye, ſtand faſt in the faith.* Theſe two are deſervedly joined together by him, to let us know how requiſite the one is in order to the other. That you may perſevere, it is neceſſary that you be conſtantly on your guard. *Remember that thou goeſt in the midſt of ſnares, and that thou walkeſt as on the battlements of a city,* Eccl. ix. 13. Thou art in great Danger whereſoever thou treadeſt, therefore look to thy Steps very diligently, otherwiſe thou wilt certainly fall. *It is impoſſible but Offences will come* (as Chriſt hath told us) Scandals will ariſe, Stumbling-blocks will be laid in our way: We have reaſon therefore to be very wary and circumſpect, and to tread with great Caution.

ESPECIALLY we ſhall think it our Concern to do ſo when we conſider how buſy the evil Spirit is to ſupplant us. He endeavours nothing more than the Downfal and Apoſtacy of good Men: This is a Prey he is moſt greedy of, this is a Booty he lies in wait for with the greateſt Induſtry. The *red Dragon* triumphs when he bruſhes down with his Tail* *the Stars of Heaven,* thoſe that ſhine bright in the Firmament of the Church, and are eminent for their Virtue and Holineſs. His grand Work is to ſhake theſe out of their Orb; for of all Things in a Chriſtian's Life Satan bears the greateſt Enmity to *Perſeverance.* This baffles all his Deſigns, and defeats all his Wiles and Devices: And therefore he is inraged againſt it, and by all means imaginable attempts its Overthrow. *Be vigilant* then *becauſe your adverſary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about ſeeking whom he may devour,* 1 Pet. v. 8. It is your Intereſt to be wary and watchful. Come not near this implacable Foe; approach not his Confines; take heed of the firſt Beginnings and Eſſays of Sin, watch againſt the leaſt Degree of Apoſtacy: never give way to Security and Careleſneſs in the ſmalleſt Matters: When you apprehend you are moſt ſafe, leave not off watching. Briefly, forget not the Apoſtle's Direction in 1 *Cor.* 10. 12. *Let him that thinketh he ſtands take heed leſt he fall.*

THESE are the *beſt Helps* to *Perſeverance,* and the *choiceſt Antidotes* againſt *Apoſtacy* that I can from the Holy Scriptures commend to you. I pray God enable you to make uſe of them in your Lives, that your Obedience may be conſtant and permanent, that you may with full Purpoſe of Heart cleave unto the Lord through the whole courſe of your Lives.

GO then and practice what I have ſaid: Think that you hear that Admonition of the Angel from Heaven, † *He that is holy let him be holy ſtill:* Shrink not from your former religious Purpoſes and Endeavours, but labour to confirm them more and more. With the holy *Pſalmiſt,* ‡ *Hate the work of them that turn aſide,* and take care to diſcover this Hatred by every Day's Practice. I have read that the People in a certain Countrey join their Forces one Day in the Year, and kill all the Snakes and Serpents they can find, but let them grow and

* *Rev.*

† *Rev.* xxi. 11.

‡ *Pſal.* ci. 3.

thrive all the year after. In a reſembling Manner moſt Men act: At certain Seaſons (as when they have great Convictions on their Spirits, or when God's Judgments are very preſſing upon them, or whilſt they are preparing themſelves for the Sacrament, *&c.*) they are very buſy in killing the ſerpentine Brood, they mortify the Fleſh, deny themſelves, refrain from their former Vices, and ſeem to be very reformed Perſons; but at all other Times, through their Lives, they indulge their ſinful Deſires and Appetites: They lay no Reſtraint on their vitious Inclinations and Affections, but nouriſh and foſter all Manner of Wickedneſs. You muſt enter into another Courſe if you intend to do any thing conſiderable in Religion. You muſt make this the conſtant Practice of your Lives, and never be weary of well-doing. You muſt *make ſtreight Steps to your Feet,* you muſt go on directly in your way, and not look back. Fix yourſelves on a ſteady Baſis, perſit in the Ways of Godlineſs, ſtand firm and immovable in it.

Do this, firſt for the ſake of thoſe who have the Charge of your Souls. *We* deſire you to be careful in this Matter for *our ſake:* According to that of St. *John* to the elect Lady and her Children, *Look to yourſelves that we loſe not thoſe things which we have wrought,* 2 Epiſt. 8. *v.* The Meaning of which Words is this, Perſevere in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, that *our* Endeavours and Labours in the Miniſtry may not be fruſtrated; that we may rejoice in the good Succeſs of our Praying and Preaching. Whereas, if you fall away, and make ſhipwreck of Faith and a good Conſcience, after all the Care we have taken to preſerve you and to make you ſtand faſt, you will be guilty of that which will bring an unſpeakable Grief and Diſturbance to us. This was St *Paul's* very Caſe, *Heb.* x. 38. *If any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.* Which Words, I know, are commonly applied to *God,* as if they ſignified his Diſpleaſure and Anger againſt thoſe that draw back. But I am of the Judgment that this Expoſition is forced, there being nothing in the Context to incline us to believe that God is introduced here ſpeaking: But it is plain that the Apoſtle ſpeaks in his own Perſon, *My ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him that draws back,* i. e. I *Paul* ſhall be grieved at his Apoſtacy. If the Man who ſhould live by Faith, backſlideth, it will very much trouble and perplex my Mind; for there is nothing more unacceptable to a faithful Miniſter than his Peoples falling away. We beſeech you therefore, as you bear any Love and Reſpect to us, that you would continue in the Word which we have preached unto you, and that you would regulate your Converſations by it to the laſt Period of your Days.

But for *your Own* (as well as your *Miniſter's*) *ſake,* be careful of this Duty which my whole Diſcourſe hath been ſpent about. As you love yourſelves, as you tender the Welfare of your immortal Souls, weigh what I have ſaid. Loſe not all your paſt Endeavours by failing at laſt. After you have run ſo long in the Chriſtian Race, do not give over before you reach the Prize. I leave you to think how lamentable it will be to ſink in Sight of the Haven, after ſo many Dangers eſcaped to periſh in the very Port. How deplorable will it be to reflect and ſay within yourſelves, We were almoſt in Heaven, but are now in Hell paſt recovery. Think ſeriouſly of this, and you will * *hold Faith and a good Conſcience,* and perſevere in your Chriſtian Courſe unto your Lives end.

† *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to preſent you faultleſs before the Preſence of his Glory with exceeding Joy, to the only wiſe God our Saviour, be Glory and Majeſty, Dominion and Power, both now and ever.* Amen.

* 1 *Tim.* i. 19.

† Ep. *Jud.* xxiv. 25.

A DIS-

A
DISCOURSE
OF THE
Holy Art of Numbring our DAYS.

PSALM XC. 12.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wiſdom.

THIS Pſalm, as the Inſcription in the very Front of it acquaints us, was *a Prayer of* Moſes, *the Man of God*; and therefore from his being entitled the Author and Penman of it, it is gather'd, that it refers to that fatal Sentence which God denounced againſt the *Iſraelites* for their Murmuring, namely, that all that *were numbered of them according to their whole Number, from twenty years old and upward, ſhould die in the Wilderneſs*, and never ſee the Land of *Canaan*, Num. xiv. 29, 30. It is probable this Pſalm was compoſed to ſuit with this their Condition, that they might make their preſent State adminiſter to their Devotion, and by ſuch holy and uſeful Meditations as this Hymn is fraught with, give open Teſtimony of their Repentance, and ſeriouſly prepare themſelves for a future and a better Life.

THE Pſalm begins with God's gracious Adminiſtration and Providence towards his own People from the Beginning of the World, *Lord thou haſt been our dwelling place in all generations: before the mountains were brought forth, even from everlaſting to everlaſting thou art God*, and thou art that God that haſt preſerved thy Servants. The *Pſalmiſt* having thus in the firſt Place aſſerted God's almighty and immutable Power, he proceeds next, by way of Antitheſis, to declare the frail and changeable State of the Sons of Men: *Thou turneſt man to deſtruction, and ſayeſt, Return ye children of men*, that is, thou juſtly puniſheſt Mankind with Death, and biddeſt them return to the Earth from whence they had their Original. Man having ſinned againſt thee, thou haſt made his Life ſhort and fading, and wilt not ſuffer him to ſtay long upon the Earth. But the next Words ſeem to anticipate an Objection that might be raiſed, namely, that *Adam* and ſome others of the antediluvian Patriarchs lived a long time, almoſt a thouſand Years, and therefore Man's Days on Earth are not ſo ſhort as is ſuggeſted. To which the *Pſalmiſt* anſwers, *A thouſand years in thy ſight are but as yeſterday when it is paſt, and as a watch in the night.* The Life of Man at its greateſt Length is but as a Day paſt and gone, or rather, but as the ſixth Part of a Day, the Space of four Hours, called here a *Watch in the Night*, which inſenſibly paſſes away in

Sleep. Such an inconſiderable time is Man's Life: For a thouſand Years bears no proportion at all with God's Eternity.

The *Pſalmiſt* adds, *Thou carrieſt them away as with a flood,* thou ſweepeſt all Men away from off the Earth as with a ſudden Torrent. *They are as a Sleep,* which is another Similitude to ſet forth how frail and ſhort-liv'd we are. Our Days paſs away imperceptibly like our Sleep, or like a Dream when we are aſleep, which vaniſhes away as ſoon as we awake. A third Simile follows, *In the morning they are like graſs which groweth up: in the morning it flouriſheth, in the evening it is cut down and withereth.* This is the Emblem of frail Man, and this is more particularly a Repreſentation of the *Iſraelites* Caſe who fell in the Wilderneſs.

The *Pſalmiſt* therefore paſſes to a more punctual Deſcription of the preſent Calamity which they lay under, *We are conſumed by thine anger, and* by thy wrath we are troubled. *Thou haſt ſet our iniquities before thee, our ſecret ſins in the light of thy countenance.* Where we ſee they lament their miſerable Condition, and at the ſame time acknowledge their Demerit, and own their Sins to be the Procurers of their Suffering. They go on further to repreſent the Brevity and Miſery of their Lives, *All our days are paſt away in thy wrath: we ſpend our years as a tale that is told,* like ſome brief Story that is ſoon ſpoken and gone. The Septuagint have rendered this Clauſe with little Conformity to the *Hebrew*, yet the Senſe is preſented as fully as we can deſire, for thus they tranſlate it, *we have ſpent our years as a Spider,* that is, we have ſpent our Time fruitleſly and idly, we weave ſlight and uſeleſs Cobwebs, which are ſoon ſwept down.

It follows, *The days of our years are threeſcore years and ten, and if by reaſon of ſtrength they be foreſcore years, yet is their ſtrength labour and ſorrow, for it is ſoon cut off, and we fly away.* Which words ſome apply peculiarly to the *Iſraelites* that murmur'd in the Deſert, concerning whom God had denounced that they ſhould not live to enter into *Canaan*, but that they ſhould periſh in the Wilderneſs, ſome of them at the Age of Threeſcore and Ten, others at that of Fourſcore. But I think there is no Reaſon to reſtrain theſe Words, but we may well apply them to the general Age of Mankind in *Moſes*'s Time, and thereabout, which uſually did not exceed the forementioned Period; for tho' *Moſes* himſelf was an Exception to it, he living a * Hundred and Twenty Years, yet if we ſpeak of the moſt ordinary Term of Man's Life in thoſe Days, we ſhall find this to be the Extent of it. *Samuel* and *David* lived juſt Threeſcore and Ten Years, and no more. It is plain from the ſacred Hiſtory and Chronology, that there was ſhortly after *Moſes*'s Time the laſt conſiderable Contraction of Life, which remains to this very Day among the Sons of Men. And whether there may be in future Ages any farther Defalcations of Time, is not in our Power to determine, but is known only to the Almighty Governor of the World, in whoſe Diſpoſal are all Times and Seaſons. Seeing therefore that Man is doomed to a ſhort Life, we are here preſcribed this excellent and moſt uſeful Prayer, that God would *ſo teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wiſdom.*

* *Deut.* xxxi.

In which Words we may obſerve theſe three Parts. 1. The holy Man's devout Arithmetick, the divine and excellent Art of *Numbering our Days.* 2. The great Uſe and Benefit of this heavenly Art, *that we may apply our hearts unto wiſdom.* 3*dly*, Here is at once intimated to us both the *Teacher* of this excellent Art, and the proper *Means* to attain it, in thoſe Words in the Front of the Text, *So teach us.* God only can inſtruct us in this great Point, and we may moſt effectually obtain it by Prayer.

I begin with the firſt, the *Pſalmiſt*'s holy Arithmetick: or the divine Skill of Numbering our Days. *So teach us to number our days:* Thoſe ancient Philoſophers *Pythagoras* and *Plato* placed very great Virtue in Numbers, and their Scholars after them initiated thoſe they taught in the Doctrine of Numbers. And the *Jewiſh* Cabaliſts were exceeding great Criticks here, and ſtrangely extolled the Myſtery of Numbers, vainly imagining all Knowledge to be contained in them. But I am now propounding to you that which is not built upon Fancy and Imagination. We are certain beyond all poſſibility of being impoſed upon, that this Arithmetick in my Text, this *Numbering of our Days*, is of the greateſt Virtue and Efficacy imaginable in the Life of Man, and Matters of the greateſt Importance depend upon it.

BUT it may be ſaid, what great Art can this be to number to Threeſcore Years and Ten, or to Fourſcore, which is the Limit of Man's Life? This is an eaſy Task, and he is a ſorry Accomptant that cannot reach this. Or ſuppoſe the Sum ſhould riſe much higher, it is no difficult Employment. There are thoſe that have attempted to give us the juſt Number of the Stars: And it is not hard to tell how many Minutes have been ſince the Creation of the World to this very Time. What Myſtery then is this to give an Account of a few Years, and to tell the Total of a Man's Life upon Earth?

TO explain then the *Pſalmiſt*'s Meaning, I ſhall do it firſt negatively and by way of Remotion, *to Number our Days* is not to know the preciſe Boundaries of our Life, and the ſet Term of our Abode in this World; for the Almighty is not pleaſed to grant this to mortal Men. The particular and determined Period of our Days is locked up intirely in the divine Deſtinies, and it is not permitted to any one on Earth to pry and ſearch into it, much leſs to attain the Knowledge of it. Again, it would not be any real Benefit to us to arrive at the certain Knowledge of Things of this Nature, for being acquainted with them, we ſhould (as our vile Nature is now diſpoſed) make them ſerviceable to bad Ends and Purpoſes, and particularly we might be tempted to protract our Repentance, and to run into a further Courſe of ſinning againſt God.

Secondly, MORE poſitively the holy Man would have us underſtand here by *numbering our Days* a ſerious and attentive Conſideration of the Frailty and Shortneſs of this Life: As if he had ſaid, Give us thy Grace to convince us effectually of this important Truth: And let us ever bear it in our Thoughts and fix it on our Memories. Thy Days are innumerable, but ours are ſoon caſt up. Yea, *Our age is nothing before thee*, Pſal. xxxix. 5. it is a *Cypher*, it is of no Accompt in the Arithmetick of Heaven; for what are a few Days in reſpect of Eternity? This without doubt is the Import of the *Pſalmiſt*'s Words; and it carries the ſame Senſe with thoſe in *Pſal.* xxxix. 4. *Lord make me to know my end and the meaſure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am*, or, according to the *Hebrew*, *what time I have*. In which Words the holy Man doth not out of Curioſity deſire God to let him know the juſt Term of his Life, but only requeſts that he may be made ſenſible of the Brevity of it. That this is his Meaning is clear from the enſuing Words, for having obtained what he deſired, he cries out, *Behold, thou haſt made my days as a hand-breadth*: I am throughly convinced that my Days are few, and I will continually meditate on it as a Truth of great Importance.

AND that this is the genuine Meaning of the Words, may be confirm'd from the Stile of Scripture, where *Numbering* implies *Paucity*. Thus in *Gen.* xxxiv. 30. *men of number are a few men*: and in *Num.* ix. 20. *days of number* are a few Days. *When the days of number are come*, ſaith *Job*, *then I ſhall go the way whence I ſhall not return*, Job xvi. 22. that is, within a ſhort time I ſhall leave this World. So in another place, *the number of the days* of a Man's Life is thoſe few Days that a Man hath to live here upon Earth. And in ſeveral other places which might be produced, *fewneſs* is expreſſed by the Word *Number*, becauſe things that are but few are eaſily numbered. And accordingly the *Pſalmiſt* in the Text by *numbering our days* denotes the Fewneſs and the Brevity of them, and he would have us imprint this on our Minds, that our Life is ſhut up within very ſhort and uncertain Limits.

IT is requiſite that we often think of this, that our Abode in this World is of little Duration, and that we are haſtning into another State. The Brags of Immortality in this Life have proved a Cheat. One of the chief Pretenders to it diſcovered that he was an Impoſtor: He gloried that he could make others Immortal, but could not protect his own Life beyond Forty Seven. We cannot ſecure our Reſidence here for a Moment. We may be ſuddenly ſurprized and ſnatched away, and no Art or Induſtry can poſſibly prevent it. The *Pagan* Moraliſts have admirable Sentences and Sayings to this Purpoſe: They love to be copious on this Theme. But I wave them wholly, and remit you to the Book of God, the Scriptures inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt. Theſe will abundantly furniſh you with all that is fit to be ſaid on this Head. Therefore conſult the ſacred Volume, and where it treats on this Subject, peruſe it with the greateſt Serioufneſs and Solemnity imaginable.

To bring this home to you, who in this Aſſembly ſhall follow next after our deceaſed is utterly beyond the Knowledge of the greateſt Pretenders to Foreſight, and is wrapt up in the Roll of the divine Decrees, which none but the All-ſeeing Eye of Heaven can pierce into. But this we all know and are ſure of, that the Time of our Life is ſhort, and the Leaſe of it will ſoon expire. How many do you ſee cut off in their Prime, and cropt in their blooming Years? How many are robbed of their Breath by Sickneſſes and Diſeaſes? And how many by Caſualties? And by what great Numbers by their own Debauchery and God's juſt Judgment are ſeiz'd upon? However, by the Courſe of Nature, as it is now fix'd, and by the Determination of Heaven, you are confin'd to a ſmall Space of Time, and when you have weather'd out a few Days, you muſt quit your Station, and leave this World, and paſs into another. Death conſtantly waits upon you, and is continually in your Company, and every Minute converſes with you.

There is not a Moment paſſes but it reads Lectures of Mortality to you, and reminds you of your flitting State, and calls upon you to provide for your Departure hence. You ſit with Death at the Table, for your Life is maintained by the Death of other Creatures. You lie down with it, and have it for your Bed-fellow, Sleep being the Image of Death. To treat here of the *common Maladies* which our Bodies are liable to, would be too tedious: only this I ſuggeſt as a thing well known to thoſe of you who are acquainted with the Fabrick of human Bodies, that there is not one ſingle Member, no not one of the leaſt Parts or Veſſels, which hath not a *diſtinct* and *peculiar Diſeaſe* belonging to it, beſides all the Troops of them which invade the whole Body in general. You carry about with you the conſtant Remembrances of the Uncertainty of Life, and conſequently of the undeniable Certainty of Death. Death goes along with you from one End of your Days to the other: When you were firſt born into the World, you entered but upon a dying and faint Life: You grapple afterwards with Sickneſs and Languiſhments; and at laſt, being bereft of all the Aids and Succours of Life, you can hold out no longer, but willingly or unwillingly ſurrender yourſelves to the Grave. Wherefore I beſeech you, my Brethren, lay this to Heart, and in good earneſt ponder the Brevity of your Lives. This is the holy Prophet's ſanctified Arithmetick, or the divine Art of *Numbering our Days*, that is, ſeriouſly conſidering the Fewneſs of them.

But alaſs! this, as excellent an Art, as neceſſary a Duty as it is, is but mean and inconſiderable unleſs we add the *Uſe* and *Benefit* of it, which is expreſſed in the next Words, *That we may apply our hearts unto wiſdom*, and is the ſecond Thing I undertook to ſpeak of. The Skill is in learning *how* to number our Days, *in what manner* to diſcharge the Duty. *So* teach us to number our Days, *that* we may apply our Hearts unto Wiſdom. The *manner* then is that which I am now to enquire into, and to give you an Account of. We muſt *ſo* conſider of the Fewneſs of our Days, as to learn *Wiſdom* by it. In one Word then, to tell you what that is, it is no other than to live well, and to prepare for Death, and the Conſequences of it; for this is to be truly *Wiſe* and *Prudent*. On this is grounded that Wiſh in *Deut.* xxxii. 29. *O! that they were wiſe, that they would conſider their latter end!* O! that they would ſhew their Wiſdom in numbering their Days! which is here called *conſidering their latter End.* It is obſerved of natural *Fools* and Ideots that they cannot *Number.* It is as remarkable an Attendant of *ſpiritual Folly* that thoſe who are poſſeſs'd with it cannot reckon right, cannot number their Days as they ſhould do, that is, ſo as to make it ſerviceable to a religious and pious Life. This is the *applying our Hearts to* true and ſaving *Wiſdom.* We read that they were the *wiſe Virgins* that provided themſelves againſt the Approach of the Bridegroom. And that is the *Wiſdom* of the Text to prepare ourſelves by the Meditation of Death for the Coming of our great Lord.

Here then we are to know and remember that that Perſon only is really *Wiſe* who directs his Life to thoſe excellent Ends and Purpoſes for which God beſtowed it, namely, for the ſerving and honouring Him, and advancing his own and others everlaſting Happineſs. The Generality of the World never ſo much as think *why* they live, and *to what purpoſe* their Maker hath given them a Being: Or elſe by their Enterprizes and Actions we may gueſs that they believe they were born to live in Pleaſure, or to gather up Wealth, or to purſue the Honours of the World, for they ſpend their Time wholly in enquiring after and proſecuting theſe Things. But it is undoubtedly true that the great Creator hath given them Lives for better and nobler Ends. The main Deſign of them, and of all the Bleſſings conferred upon them by God, is by them to be enabled to live to his Honour. He is the Author of their Beings, and he ſtamp'd upon their Souls his own Image, that they might tranſcribe it in their Actions, and render him that Service which is due unto his divine Majeſty. He hath given us holy and juſt Commands, which it is as much our Intereſt as our Duty to obſerve.

ESPECIALLY the Revelation of his Will by Jeſus Chriſt in the Diſcoveries of the Goſpel is a ſingular Direction to us, and fully acquaints us what are the great and indiſpenſible Conditions of the New Covenant. Here we are informed that though we cannot merit any thing of God, yet he expects Duty from us; and when we conſcientiouſly perform it, he will not fail to reward us. At the ſame time that we take care to pleaſe God, we work out our own Salvation. We moſt effectually conſult the Welfare of our immortal Souls when we are ſollicitous to obſerve the divine Precepts. We ſecure our Happineſs hereafter by being Holy and Righteous here. By regulating our Actions according to the Rules of the Goſpel we ſhall be able to render a comfortable Account at the Day of Judgment, and that not only in reſpect of our Relation to *God* immediately, and to *ourſelves*, but with regard alſo to thoſe we converſe with in the World.

THE next grand Deſign therefore of our Lives, is to do all the Good we can unto *others*, to be careful that we inſtruct and inform the Ignorant; that we exhort Men to a godly Life, and inculcate their Duty upon them, and perſwade them by all Arguments to embrace Religion; that we comfort and refreſh the diſconſolate Spirits who are ſinking into Deſpair; that we check and reprove the diſorderly Manners of the degenerate World; that by a holy Example, by an innocent and blameleſs Behaviour, and by an univerſal Charity, we win the worſt to an Eſteem of Virtue and Goodneſs. And to animate us to the diligent and faithful Diſcharge of all our Chriſtian Offices, we are to remember that another World is to be expected after this, and that as we behave ourſelves here, ſo we ſhall fare there. To prepare ourſelves therefore for that future State cannot but be reckoned our greateſt *Wiſdom.* And this is moſt certain, that this Preparation can be no otherwiſe made than by living well, by performing our particular Duties, and herein to exerciſe ourſelves to have Conſciences void of Offence towards God and towards all Men.

NOW the *Application* of what I have ſaid can be no other than this, that we put in practice the Duty of the Text, that is, that we ſo conſider the Shortneſs and Uncertainty of our Lives as to make it ſerviceable to the beſt Ends: And I have told you what theſe Ends are, namely, the glorifying of the eternal Majeſty by a conſcientious obſerving what is required of us with reſpect to him, to ourſelves, and to our Brethren. I am ſenſible that the Shortneſs of our Lives and our Obnoxiouſneſs to the Stroke of Death every Moment are common Themes, and are in every Man's Mouth; but the Reaſon why they are generally uſeleſs and inſignificant, is becauſe we neglect this Part of the Text, we do not ſo ſpeak of them, and ſo meditate upon them as to *apply our Hearts unto Wiſdom*, to make them inſtrumental to Holineſs, which is the beſt Wiſdom. This therefore is that which I requeſt of you, that you would make *this* the End and Reſult of your Thoughts of Mortality.

AND truly, if the ſerious Conſideration of *Death* will not put us upon ſober Reſolves, and check our looſe and extravagant Appetites, certainly no human thing can. If Funerals will not make us ſerious and devout, there is little Hope that any thing elſe will be able to do it. If Graves and Tombs, if Hearſes and Coffins be not Arguments and Topicks ſerviceable to this Purpoſe, where ſhall we find any? If we can carouze in dead Mens Skulls, and ſing to the Muſick of paſſing Bells, our Tempers ſurely are very odd and deſperate. For the deliberate Meditation of Death doth naturally put us upon Repentance and Amendment

ment of Life. It hath the greateſt Influence on Virtue and Holineſs that can be imagined. Wherefore, my Brethren, let it have its full Influence and free Operation upon you: Let the Thoughts of your Diſſolution excite you to continual Watchfulneſs, to Self-denial and Mortification, and guarding yourſelves againſt all Temptations. Think meanly of the World, and all its Gayeties: Deſpiſe theſe Things below, and aſpire to thoſe that are above: Trample upon Earth, and breathe after Heaven, and climb up to the Manſions of Glory. Remember that you cannot properly be ſaid to *live*, unleſs you be *religious*. For Life is to be reckon'd by Grace and Holineſs. You muſt count your Age not from the Day of your natural Birth, but the *Year of our Lord*, my Meaning is, from that time that you were born again by the Spirit of Chriſt our Lord.

O CONSIDER how deplorable, but how true it is, that the *one thing neceſſary* is the only thing that is neglected by the Generality of Mankind. And be perſwaded not to conform yourſelves to this common Practice: Purſue not Trifles and Things of no Moment, but let the indiſpenſible Concerns of your Salvation and Happineſs take up your Time and your Thoughts: And live as thoſe that expect the Summons of Death every Minute: Urge it upon your Minds that *there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wiſdom, in the Grave whither you are going*: And therefore, as *Solomon* rationally infers and adviſes, *whatſoever your Hand findeth to do, do it with your Might*, Eccl. ix. 10. Let your main Deſign be to make ſure of a better Life: And you cannot do it any otherwiſe than by deporting yourſelves well in this, and by putting up devout and earneſt *Addreſſes* unto the God of Heaven, that he would vouchſafe you his Grace ſo *to number your Days that you may apply your Hearts unto Wiſdom.*

WHICH brings me to the third and laſt thing conſiderable in the Text, *viz.* the *Teacher* of this excellent Leſſon, or the *Means* by which we come to attain this divine Art, intimated and implied in the firſt Words of the Text, *Teach us*. *God* alone can effectually inſtruct us: And by *Prayer* alone we can obtain it of him. *Moſes*, the Penman of this Pſalm, was brought up and inſtructed in all the Learning of the *Egyptians*, of which *Numbers* was no ſmall Part. But this divine Art of computing our Days is the Gift only of the great God, who hath the Hearts of all Men in his Hands. Do we not ſee how unſkilful the World is in this holy Science? It is ſad to obſerve how few arrive to it. Alas! Philoſophy can do but little with its trite Sayings, that Death is common to all, and cannot be avoided, and therefore muſt be patiently undergone; that it is the End of our preſent Miſery; that it is a thing as natural to us as Sleep, and the like. Theſe are cold and comfortleſs Suggeſtions: And they may ſtupify us, but they cannot chear us. No Principles but thoſe of Chriſtianity can yield us any ſolid Comfort.

A FORE-TASTE of which that great Sufferer had attain'd to, when he ſolaced himſelf after this Manner, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter Day upon the Earth*, &c.

A FIRM Belief and Truſt in *Jeſus Chriſt the Redeemer*, is the only true Baſis of Peace and Satisfaction of Mind to thoſe that labour under great Sufferings, and eſpecially to ſuch who are encountering with Death. It is he that hath taken away the Sting of it. By his dying he hath made Death not only tolerable, but deſirable, lovely and welcome. Now it is a Bleſſing, tho' of itſelf it is a Curſe. Now it opens the Door to Heaven and Happineſs, as before it was an Inlet to everlaſting Miſery. The Forgiveneſs of Sins by the Blood of the Redeemer, is the grand Support and Solace of departing Souls. Now they may ſay with *Simeon*, *Lord, now letteſt thou thy Servant depart in Peace, for mine Eyes have ſeen thy Salvation*. By a lively Faith we not only ſee, but lay hold on this Saviour, and have his Righteouſneſs and Merits made over to us.

LET us then think ourſelves concern'd to thank God for giving us by the Goſpel theſe extraordinary Arguments of Comfort: And let them be moſt forcible Motives to us to a godly Life. And ſince we who are bleſs'd with the ſingular Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, have greater Encouragements againſt Death, and more convincing Evidences of the endleſs Happineſs of righteous Souls than others have been furniſh'd with, let us live always in a firm and unſhaken Belief and a warm Senſe of that future Bleſſedneſs, and thence be excited to make it our chief Care and Buſineſs that we may be fitted for that happy State, and be meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance with the Saints in Light.

A DISCOURSE OF THE Chriſtian Duty of deſiring to depart.

PHILIP. i. 23.

——*Having a Deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better.*

AS St. *Paul* had been extraordinarily active in perſecuting the Chriſtians, ſo being converted he became extremely zealous for the Faith, and purſued the Welfare of the Church with a greater Forwardneſs and Vigour than any of the other Apoſtles. As he perſecuted others to Death, ſo now he is ready to lay down his own Life for the Service of the Saints, and the Honour of Jeſus: He tells the *Philippians* in ſhort, that he is prepar'd both to *preach* and to *dye* for the Advancing of his Maſter's Glory. His Hope and Confidence was that *Chriſt ſhould be magnified in his Body, whether it were by Life or by Death: For,* ſaith he, *to me to live is Chriſt, and to die is Gain,* ver. 20, 21. that is, if I live, and be permitted to preach the Goſpel, I ſhall have the Advantage and Privilege of ſerving Chriſt, and propagating the Chriſtian Faith, and thereby of ſaving Mens Souls: And if I die, it will prove unſpeakably gainful to me, becauſe I ſhall reap the Fruit of all my Labours and Sufferings. *Yet what I ſhall chooſe,* ſaith he, *I wot not,* ver. 22. that is, I cannot tell which of theſe two to prefer, the Scales are *even* in a Manner; for (as it follows in the former Clauſe of the Words of my Text) *I am in a Streight betwixt two,* that is, the *two* Things before-mentioned, Life and Death, leaving this World or going to a better. I am preſs'd on both Sides, and find my ſelf inclined to both; I deſire to *live,* and I would *die* too.

BUT yet when I *further* conſider of the Matter, and weigh the Advantages of *departing* and being with Chriſt, I pronounce this to be *far better,* far better than to ſtay here below, far better than to be employ'd in the World; nay, it is *beſt of all,* for the comparative is here put for the ſuperlative, as is uſual in the Sacred Stile, as well as in other good Authors. So that this Clauſe being caſt in, turns the Scale, and determines the Uncertainty of the Apoſtle's Choice, and brings him out of his *Streights.* He hath a Deſire to depart and to be with Chriſt, and upon this good Ground *becauſe* this is the *beſt* thing he can wiſh for. Wherefore our *Engliſh* Tranſlation is deficient, having left out the Word *for,* which is in the *Greek,* and ſignifies the *Reaſon* of the Apoſtle's Choice. He lets us know that his Deſire is rational and accountable, and founded on very ſolid Grounds. To leave this Earth, and to go to Heaven, is in all Points moſt eligible, and therefore he prefers it, and actually chooſes it before all. *I have a Deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, for that is far better.* So it ſhould be read.

HAVING thus briefly diſcanted on the Context, and brought you to the Words themſelves, I will offer to you theſe three Remarks upon them. 1. It is lawful and allowable, and no Ways unbecoming a Chriſtian, to deſire Death, *having a Deſire to depart.* 2. A good Chriſtian deſires Death not ſimply for itſelf, but becauſe it brings him to the Fruition of his Lord Chriſt Jeſus, *having a Deſire to depart, and* thereby *to be with Chriſt.* 3. This being with Chriſt is the *beſt* thing we can deſire and wiſh for: πολλῷ γὰρ μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον, *it is much the beſt.*

Firſt, I SAY, it is allowable and lawful, and therefore not unworthy of a Chriſtian, to deſire Death. There is a natural Deſire of Death, *viz.* that which proceeds from the frail Conſtitution of Mankind: For as it is natural to *fear* Death upon ſome Account, ſo it is as natural upon others to *deſire* and *wiſh* for it, namely, for the ſame Reaſon that a weary Traveller wiſhes to be at home. Death in its *own Nature* is not deſirable, yea, it is abhorr'd, becauſe it deſtroys the Workmanſhip of Nature: But it is deſirable becauſe it is inſtrumental to free us from the Burden and Fatigues of this Life. Thus when Sickneſs and Diſeaſes and ſharp Pains make our State uneaſy, we are reminded of that which will give us Eaſe, and be our catholick Cure. We are prompted by our reaſonable Nature to breathe after a Redreſs, to pant after a Ceſſation of our preſent Evils: And the Soul of Man ſhoots forth with a ſtrong elaſtick Force to come at this. So in time of Perſecution and publick Dangers a ſeaſonable Releaſe may be wiſh'd for, but always with an *abſolute Submiſſion* to the Will of God, as you ſhall hear anon. King *Joſias*'s Death was a Favour and Kindneſs to him, becauſe it immediately preceded the Captivity in *Babylon.* St. *Auſtin*'s Departure was very opportune, and even to be deſir'd by him, becauſe it was at the time when *Hippo* (the Place of his Reſidence) was beſieg'd by the *Vandals*, and a little before it was taken and ſack'd by thoſe ſavage Invaders. *Elias* and *Jonas* call'd for Death when they were under great Diſtreſs and Affliction, though 'tis not to be denied that thoſe Wiſhes of theirs were mingled with great Infirmities and Diſorders, which made them in ſome Meaſure blamable.

BUT if the Deſire of Death be void of theſe (againſt which I will particularly caution afterwards) and be only an innocent Longing to go off this troubleſome and ſinful Stage, I don't ſee but that it is lawful and juſtifiable. For certainly it is agreeable to human Nature (and that is not ſuperceded and extinguiſh'd by Grace) to covet a lawful Freedom from our Oppreſſures and Grievances. The weather-beaten Mariner may lawfully wiſh for his Port and Haven. The weary Labourer may rationally deſire Sleep and Repoſe. Shall we be fond of Dangers and Diſaſters? Shall we be in Love with Tempeſts and Storms, and refuſe to be taken under a quiet Shelter? Shall we be unwilling to leave a howling Wilderneſs, and to repair to our Country, the Land of Promiſe and Bleſſedneſs? Shall we not deſire *that* which is the welcome Cloſe of all our Infirmities, Troubles and Sufferings, which puts an End to all our Complaints, and removes us from all the Evils of this mortal State, and from Sin the greateſt of Evils, and from all Temptations to it? This was the Senſe even of * thoſe Perſons who had nothing but natural Light to conduct them. They reckon'd it a great Specimen of Wiſdom to deſire Death rather than Life. But it is not this only which a Chriſtian ought to aſpire to. There is a Deſire of Death which proceeds from Faith and ſtrong Devotion, and *this* is that which is properly the Saints Deſire of Death, and is the thing which is next mention'd in the Text. And ſo I paſs to the

SECOND Propoſition, which is this, A good Chriſtian deſires Death not becauſe it is ſimply and barely a Freedom from the Burden of the Fleſh, and the Calamities of this Life, but becauſe he is thereby admitted into the Preſence and Fruition of Chriſt Jeſus. *Having a Deſire to depart, and* (not only ſo, but) *to be with Chriſt.* St. *Paul* wiſhes to be ſeparated from his Body by Death, that he may be united to Chriſt his Head. He deſires to arrive by Death to that State in another World which may give him the Poſſeſſion and Fruition of his Redeemer, which may bring him to an intimate Converſe and Communion with his beloved Bridegroom and Lord. And it is this which fires the Breaſts of all holy Men with ſuch a Longing to relinquiſh this World: This makes them utter

* *Non ſolum fortior, ſed etiam ſapientior mortis interdum quàm vitæ eſt cupiditas.* Val. Max. l. 9. c. 13. *Sapientis animus totus in mortem prominet, hoc vult, hoc meditatur, hâc ſemper cupidine fertur.* Sen. ad Maj. c. 23.

ter the Apoſtle's Language here, *I deſire to depart.* The very ſame Motive gave Occaſion to thoſe like Words of old *Simeon, Lord, now letteſt thou thy Servant depart.* Having lived to ſee that glorious Spectacle God manifeſted in the Fleſh, who was to be the Saviour and Redeemer of Mankind, he is content to ſhut his Eyes for ever. All other Objects are mean and deſpicable after this joyful Sight. There is nothing now left that is worth the looking on. When *Simeon* had *Chriſt* in his Arms, he had no Room for any thing elſe. Farewel the World and all that is in it: Welcome Death, which will carry me to a nearer Sight of my Saviour, and to the full Accompliſhment of my Salvation.

It is this that fills the Hearts of Believers and obedient Chriſtians with the earneſt Deſires of paſſing out of this World into another. *Rom.* viii. 23. *We groan within ourſelves, waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our Body.* And again, 2 *Cor.* v. 2. *In this we groan, earneſtly deſiring to be cloathed upon with our Houſe which is from Heaven.* Theſe Expreſſions of *groaning* and *earneſtly deſiring* acquaint us that our Wiſhes ſhould not be faint and cold, weak and languid, but very ardent and vehement, and that they ſhould be the conſtant and uninterrupted Sallies of our Souls. They cannot be otherwiſe, when Heaven and eternal Happineſs are their Object. When the Apoſtle mentions *a Crown of Righteouſneſs laid up for him, which the Lord the righteous Judge ſhall give him at that Day,* it is no Wonder that he ſo chearfully ſpeaks of his *being ready to be offer'd, and of the time of his Departure being at hand,* 2 Tim. iv. 6. The Proſpect and Aſſurance of an heavenly Crown make him profeſs his Willingneſs to go hence, that he may be in Poſſeſſion of it. As Death is fear'd by the Wicked for that which follows it, (after Death comes the dreadful Judgment, and after *that* eternal Puniſhment) ſo Death is deſired by good Men for what enſueth it, namely, everlaſting Bleſſedneſs in the higheſt Heavens, and the living with Jeſus to eternal Ages. Finally, the whole Army of Martyrs, who boldly profeſſed the Chriſtian Faith, in Defiance of the greateſt Torments, and with an undaunted Bravery, laid down their Lives for the Defence of the Goſpel, theſe all are Witneſſes to the Truth of the Propoſition which I have offer'd to you, that is, that Death is to be wiſh'd for and heartily deſir'd on the Foreſight of our enjoying our bleſſed Saviour in the Life to come.

But that I may not be miſtook by any here preſent, and that the true Meaning and Deſign of this and the former Propoſition may be rightly apprehended, I will give you theſe two Cautions or Limitations: 1. This Deſire of departing which I have been ſpeaking of, muſt be ever attended with a perfect *Reſignation* of ourſelves to God's good Will and Pleaſure: And conſequently it muſt not be the Product of an impatient and diſcontented Spirit. Such a Deſire of Death is unworthy of a *Chriſtian,* as well as of a *Man,* and is an Argument of a mean and dejected Soul, of a feeble and grovling Spirit, and is inconſiſtent with the evangelical Grace of Patience, for no Man is truly patient unleſs he be content to live. We read that the *Iſraelites,* becauſe they were not permitted to go back again to *Egypt,* deſir'd they might be buried in the Wilderneſs, which was the Effect of Impatience, and therefore ſuch a Deſire was unlawful, and accordingly we find that they were puniſh'd for it, by having their Wiſh granted; for, excepting *Caleb* and *Joſhua,* all that People, from twenty Years old and upwards, were buried in the Deſerts of *Arabia.* So it is probable that *Job* and *Jeremiah* (otherwiſe good Men) longed for Death and Diſſolution in an unlawful Manner, that is, out of Diſcontent, and not with due Deference to the Divine Will.

Wherefore let us be very cautious here, and whenſoever we commence our Wiſhes of Departure hence, let us take Care that they be in Subordination to the Pleaſure and Diſpoſal of our great Lord and ſovereign Ruler. We muſt never paſſionately call for Death when we ſee and diſcern that God hath rather appointed us to ſtay here longer, that is, when his Glory and the Good of others are eminently concern'd. This was the Caſe of that good King *Hezekiah,* who wept at the Tidings of Death, and earneſtly prayed to have his Life lengthned. And this was King *David*'s Caſe, who prayed that *he might be ſpared, and that he might recover his Strength before he went hence, and ſhould be no more,* namely, in this Land of the Living, *Pſal.* xxxix. 13. So St. Paul deſired to live, that he might edify the Church, and particularly that he might be ſerviceable to the *Philippians* Souls, and *continue with them for their Furtherance and Joy of Faith,* Phil. i. 24. And thus, with ſubmiſſion to the divine Will, others may lawfully wiſh to have their Lives prolonged for the Service of God, for the Good of their Brethren, and that themſelves may be more fitted for Glory.

AND here I might add, that no good Man will dare to haſten his Death by unlawful Means; he will not *cut off* his Thread of Life, but contentedly ſuffer it to be *ſpun out.* Though he deſires to depart, yet he will not actually abandon this Life till he hath leave from God. He will not quit his Station upon Earth, till a Heavenly Call ſummons him hence. To do otherwiſe argues an unlawful Deſire of Death.

Secondly, YOU muſt take this Limitation and Reſtriction along with you, your Deſiring of Death muſt be joined with a careful Endeavour of diſcharging your Duty, and preparing yourſelves for Death. *Fit* yourſelves for your Departure, and then *deſire* it, but not before. Obſerve the Connection of the Apoſtle's Words in 2 *Cor.* v. 8. 9. *We are willing to be abſent from the body* (i. e. to depart) *and to be preſent with the Lord:* (to be with Chriſt) *wherefore we labour that whether preſent or abſent we may be accepted of him.* Endeavour to obtain the divine Acceptance, and then long for Death as paſſionately as you pleaſe. We are told that *the days of man are as the days of a hireling,* Job vii. 1. but the hired Labourer muſt not fondly call for his Wages till his *Work* be done; much leſs muſt he be careleſs and idle, and leave his Work undone, and then look for his Reward. It is Laudable and Chriſtian to long after our Country, and to deſire to return Home, but then we ought to *prepare* for our Journey, and get all Things in readineſs. Otherwiſe our Wiſhes are impertinent and idle, like that of *Balaam, Let me dye the death of the righteous:* which may be ſaid to be a good Deſire of itſelf, but as it is conſidered with the Circumſtances of the Perſon who uttered it, it is vain and fooliſh; for I appeal to you, is it not ridiculous to deſire to die the Death of the Righteous, and yet to live the Life of the Wicked? Is it not downright Nonſenſe to wiſh for a happy Departure, when we never reſolve to make ourſelves ſure of Happineſs, ſo far as it lies in us? The Apoſtle compares Man's Life to a *Race,* and tells us, that we muſt *ſo run that we may obtain,* 1 Cor. ix. 20. and we fooliſhly expect the *Prize* without this. Remember that when the ſame Apoſtle ſaith, *He is ready to be offered, and the time of his departure is at hand,* he immediately adjoins, *I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe,* (my Race) *I have kept the faith,* 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7.

THUS you ſee how neceſſary, for the right underſtanding of the foregoing Propoſitions, theſe two *Cautions* or *Qualifications* are, *viz.* that our Deſire of Death muſt ever be accompanied with an entire Submiſſion to God's Will, and with a careful Endeavour to do his Will and obſerve his Laws. Obſerve theſe Limitations, and *then* betake yourſelves to the Duty I have recommended to you, that is, *Deſire to depart that ye may be with Chriſt.* Long for your Diſſolution on this grand Conſideration, that it will give you an Entrance into Heaven, where you ſhall be with *Jeſus.* Death brings us unto our Bleſſed Lord, and by that we are put into a State of Happineſs. Although the Soul and Body be divorc'd, and that Marriage-knot untied, yet the Union between Chriſt and the Soul remains, yea, and is made much cloſer and firmer: Then the Believer is properly ſaid to *be with Chriſt,* to arrive to an intimate Converſe and Communion with his beloved Lord, and to partake of the immediate Glories of his divine Preſence. Now, I think, for this Reaſon no Man will deny that it is becoming a Chriſtian to deſire to depart and to be gone hence.

THE practical Reſult of all that I have ſaid is ſumm'd up in theſe two Heads, 1. Follow St. *Paul*'s Example here in the Text. 2. So frame your Souls and Lives that you may do it aright. *Firſt,* I ſay, let us, according to the Example which is before us, employ our Wiſhes about Heaven and Happineſs. Let us with the *Pſalmiſt* cry out, *O! that we had the Wings of a Dove, that we might fly away and be at reſt,* for here we can find no ſuch thing. In the Chriſtian Philoſophy this Earth is not the Centre, is not the Place of our Reſt and Repoſe. Here we are forced, whether we will or no, to ſee and hear thoſe Things which offend and diſturb us. Yea, we are moſt offenſive to ourſelves, becauſe of our vitious and corrupted Nature which is inſeparable from us in this State of Mortality, and by Reaſon of thoſe actual Obliquities which we are daily incident to. So that here, by the way, we may gather this, that it is a good Sign of our Hatred of Sin, and our great Willingneſs to be freed from it, when we deſire to depart, and have our Reſidence above.

O THEN for the bleſſed Shine of that Day when we ſhall neither offend God ourſelves, nor be troubled and grieved with the Offences and Miſcarriages of others! O for that happy Hour when we ſhall be out of the Sight and Hearing of this wild Throng and Rabble of the World, when we ſhall never more be vex'd with the raſh Oaths and Execrations of Sinners which too often reach our Ears; when theſe ſhall be no longer grated with the uncharitable Revilings of bad Men, with their mocking and ridiculing of all that is good and holy, with their vilifying of Religion and the very Semblance of it, wherever it appears! Now our Abode is among ſuch as are Strangers to the Life of God, and the ſtrict Ways of Chriſtianity. Here we ſojourn in *Meſhec,* and dwell in the Tents of *Kedar*, we are conſtrained to converſe with thoſe whoſe Manners we diſlike. But O for that happy Minute which ſhall tranſlate us hence into the bright Manſions of Glory, to the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect! If it comforted *Socrates* (as we find in his Speech to the Judges after he was condemned) that after Death he ſhould converſe with *Orpheus*, *Homer* and *Heſiod*, it may be much more comfortable to think that we ſhall be admitted into the Society of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and all the pious and religious Servants of God. O then for that welcome Seaſon when we ſhall be taken to that joyful Company and to that happy Place where there is no Affliction, no Suffering, and no Sin to cauſe them!

THUS let us long and breathe, ſigh and pant after another and a better World. And the rather let us do this, becauſe this is a great Evidence of our being holy and righteous Perſons. This may be a Shiboleth to diſtinguiſh between a carnal Man and a true Chriſtian. The former hugs this World with his cloſeſt Embraces, and would never part from it becauſe it is his chief Delight and Happineſs: But the latter is upon the Wing, and would be flying hence: He is very willing to bid adieu to this Earth, that he may attain to the Fruition of Chriſt in Heaven. He looks upon this Life as a State of Baniſhment and Exile, and is deſirous to return to his proper Soil. He is coop'd up and confin'd in this fleſhly Body, and is almoſt ſtifled and choaked with the unwholſome Steam of it, and therefore he deſires to be ſet at Liberty. This groſs Air agrees not with him, therefore he longs to breathe the pure Æther of happy Souls, and to be with Chriſt, his Delight and his Happineſs.

Secondly, LET us frame our Souls and Lives in ſuch a manner as we may have *good Ground* and *Reaſon* to deſire to be in another World. In order to this, let us break ourſelves of that fond Hankering after the World's Vanities, which we are too much addicted to. Let us mortify our Luſts and abandon our evil Ways and vicious Courſes, and then our Deſire of Death will be juſtifiable. Wherefore I beſeech you, Brethren, by all that is dear and precious to you, that you would receive this ſerious Word of Exhortation, (which is made the more ſeaſonable by this ſolemn Occaſion) that you would be providing for Death before it actually ruſhes in upon you. O think how unſafe and hazardous it will be to defer the Furbiſhing of your ſpiritual Armour till your laſt Encounter! Will you delay the Sharpening of your Weapons till you are going to engage the Enemy? *Then* you will not have Time and Leiſure to do it as you ſhould, therefore diſpatch this Work now; and the rather becauſe it will be of ſuch Uſe and Advantage to you when you come to leave the World. If you be thus prepared you will find yourſelves fix'd on a ſure Bottom when you are expiring your laſt. You will not then uſe the Emperor's Language, *O my poor vagrant Soul! what will become of thee? whither art thou going?* After which Rate, we are told, Cardinal *Mazarine* cried out with Tears on his Death-bed. And we have heard that a noted Man of our own compared Death to *taking a Leap in the Dark*. Theſe are the Apprehenſions of Men that are Strangers to the Life of Chriſtianity, and forget to prepare themſelves for their eternal State. Wherefore be reminded of your proper Duty at this Time, that is, with great Earneſtneſs and Vigour ſet about *the Buſineſs of your Salvation.*

AND remember to do it without Delay: Rely not upon to Morrow, but reckon every Moment your laſt, for you cannot tell but it may prove ſo. Be in continual Expectation of your Summons into another World, and then you will not be ſurpriz'd. Preſume not upon Health and Strength, and youthful Years: Promiſe not yourſelves Length of Days, but remember that the next Minute may put a Period to them. Whilſt you are in theſe Tabernacles, know what it is to *live*, that is, to live the Life of Faith and Holineſs; and then, how ſoon ſoever you go hence, you may be truly ſaid to have *lived long*. Many have been projecting to prolong Life to a vaſt Length. *Paracelſus* and the *Roſy-Crucians* have talk'd with ſome Confidence of this. *Curdan* ſaith he had ſuch a Fancy once. And the *Chineſes* have been ſtudying this a conſiderable time. My Lord *Verulam* ſeems to have ſet his Mind upon it: And a late *French* Author, Monſieur *Martel*, talks of it with ſome Confidence. And the Gentleman of *Malmsbury*, though he had reach'd a very fair Age, ſeem'd to be diſpleaſed with himſelf becauſe he had not ſtudied the Nature of Plants and Herbs, which he imagin'd (and perhaps not amiſs) would conduce much to the prolonging of Mens Days. But till the primitive Longevity can be again retriev'd (which I verily believe will happen in the laſt and approaching Oeconomy of the World) we may content and ſatisfy ourſelves with this, that *he hath lived enough, who hath lived well. Non eſt delicata res vivere*, ſaith the excellent *Seneca*, *Ep.* 108. *To live*, in the moral and religious Notion of the Word, is to be very active and vigorous, very laborious and induſtrious in the Ways of Virtue; and if we be ſo, our Life is of a ſufficient Length and Duration.

WHEREFORE *live to purpoſe*, and inure yourſelves to a conſtant and undiſturbed Courſe of Virtue and Holineſs; that you may in ſome Degree experience what Heaven is before you come thither. But forget not this (whatever you do) that it is only by the effectual Application of the Blood of Jeſus that you can have Admittance into thoſe Regions above: And it is by this alone that you can be enabled to look Death in the Face with Comfort and Rejoicing. Wherefore repreſent Death to your Thoughts as it really is to all thoſe who are good and holy, and who firmly truſt in the Lord Jeſus: Look not upon it as a formidable Enemy, for Chriſt hath diſarm'd it of its Weapons, he hath pluckt out its Sting, he hath made it tame and tractable. By dying on the Croſs he hath vanquiſh'd Death, and made it now to all true Believers an Entrance into Life and Happineſs, which are the choiceſt Things that we can deſire.

AND this leads me to the third and laſt Propoſition founded on the Words, namely, that to *be with Chriſt*, after the Troubles and Sorrows of this Life, is the *beſt thing* that our Wiſhes and Deſires can be converſant about, and is infinitely to be preferr'd before all other Things whatſoever. What I have ſaid already is an ample Proof of this, ſo that I need add no more. For if Chriſt be the Fountain of Happineſs, and all the Streams of it flow from his Blood, and if by his meritorious Death we enter into and take Poſſeſſion of that Happineſs, then it undeniably follows that to go to our gracious Maſter, and to be receiv'd into his Arms and Embraces, and to live with him for ever, is the *beſt*, and therefore the moſt *eligible* State that we can deſire. And it is by *Death* alone that we can come to the actual Poſſeſſion of this bleſſed State. By *it* a Chriſtian is born again, born to Heaven and endleſs Glory. *This* is his Feſtival-Day, this is his Jubilee, this is his Marriage-Day, this is whatever ſpeaks Rejoicing and Exultation.

WHEREFORE ſtop up the Current of your Tears, dry your wet Eyes, ceaſe your Groans and Lamentations which you are apt to indulge yourſelves in at the Departure of your Friends and Relations, tho' they die in the Lord, and reſt from the Labours and Miſeries of this ſinful Life. Conſider the State and Condition which they are now paſs'd into, and then you will find Matter for Rejoicing rather than Lamenting. Death makes every good Man happy, it preſents him with an incorruptible Crown: And therefore 'tis no Wonder that when he was here on Earth he preſs'd forward towards this ineſtimable Prize, and (as I have ſhew'd in this foregoing Diſcourſe) paſſionately and earneſtly deſired to be Poſſeſſor of it.

A
DISCOURSE
OF THE
Bleſſedneſs of the well-employ'd Servant.

LUKE xii. 43.

Bleſſed is that Servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing.

IF you conſult this Chapter, you will find that theſe Words have Relation to a notable Parable delivered by our Saviour, in which the main Duty and Concern of every Chriſtian is pathetically ſet forth by the uſual Practice of ſome Lord or great Man who hath many Servants and Attendants, unto every one of whom he appoints a proper Task and Employment; and when it ſeems good to him he calls them to a Reckoning, and takes an Account of their Work, and then thoſe Servants who have minded their Truſt and Charge, and have been faithful and diligent in his Houſe, or about his Affairs abroad, ſhall be rewarded by him: Some higher Place and Preferment ſhall be conferr'd upon them, and they ſhall ſhare in his conſtant Favour and Bounty. This ſhall be the happy Event unto ſuch who were found active and faithful in the Employment they were entruſted with: [*Bleſſed is that Servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing.*] Hereby is ſet forth unto us the State of all Chriſtians to the End of the World. They have Work and Buſineſs to diſpatch, and they are accountable for it to their great Lord and Maſter.

IN the Words then obſerve theſe three Parts; 1. The *Coming of the Lord*, which may have ſeveral Significations: For there is the Lord's Coming in Vengeance to deſtroy his Enemies; there is his Coming in Mercy to reſcue and relieve his Servants (and thus in this Chapter it is taken more than once;) and it is probable it may refer to Chriſt's Coming againſt the *Jews* to deſtroy their chief City and Nation (which happen'd not many Years after.) There is alſo his *Coming* at Death; and *Laſtly*, at the Day of Judgment, which is the moſt ſignal Advent and Appearance of the Lord. 2. Here is the Behaviour and Carriage of the Servant (*i. e.* of every good Chriſtian) at his Lord's Coming. He is diſcharging his proper Duty, he is performing the Task which his Maſter ſet him about. He is *found ſo doing.* 3. Here is the good and happy Event of the Servant's Behaviour. The Chriſtian that faithfully attends his Duty, and continues in it to th laſt, ſhall be rewarded here and hereafter, *Bleſſed is that Servant.*

The Words then will afford you theſe following Remarks: 1. That we are all of us Servants and Stewards, and are to be in Employment, we muſt be *doing*. 2. It is not enough to be employ'd and to be doing ſomething, but we muſt be *ſo doing*, doing our Maſter's Work. 3. Our Lord will come and take an Account of what we have done. 4. Thoſe Servants whom Chriſt at his Coming ſhall find about his Buſineſs, are in a *bleſſed* Condition.

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Let me beſeech you then to conſider this ſeriouſly, and to baniſh all Sloth and Idleneſs. Think of it in good earneſt that there is not one of you here preſent but is endow'd with ſome Talent or other. You muſt by no Means lay it up in a Napkin, and bury it in Obſcurity; but you are to traffick and trade with it, and to increaſe and improve it for your Maſter. Remember that to ſit unemploy'd is a Sin of a heinous Nature, and is the Occaſion of many of thoſe Sins that Men are guilty of. This makes them obnoxious to the Temptation of the evil Spirit: when the Husbandman *ſlept*, then his Field was abuſed. Think alſo of the Divine Vengeance which attends it, *The Ground which brings forth Briars and Thorns is near unto curſing.* This is the barren Chriſtian: He is manur'd and cultivated every Hour by the good Hand of Providence, and yet there appear no Tokens of *Fruitfulneſs*; and therefore he may expect to hear that dreadful Doom pronounced againſt him, [*Caſt ye the unprofitable Servant into utter Darkneſs.*] This is the firſt obſervable in the Words, that we are all *Servants* and muſt be employ'd.

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And as to the Bodies and outward Concerns of your Brethren, you are to have a Regard unto them, by relieving the Poor and Neceſſitous, by viſiting the Sick, and by rejoicing the Hearts of diſtreſſed Widows and fatherleſs Children with a ſeaſonable Supply of their Wants. When our Saviour was on Earth, *he went about doing Good.* We cannot be better employ'd than our Maſter was: And we ſhall not fail of an ample and ſatisfactory Recompence in the higheſt Heavens.

Laſtly, Serving God in the ſeveral *particular Callings and Places* wherein he hath ſet you, is a Work which you ſhould endeavour to be found doing. Let me tell you, you ſerve God by your ſecular Vocations: You may bring Glory to him even by your worldly Employment, tho' it be never ſo mean and contemptible. The pooreſt Labourer by a conſcientious Diſcharge of his proper Truſt, by Diligence and Honeſty, is in a Capacity to honour his Maker and the Religion which he profeſſes. It is an apoſtolical Command, [*Let every Man abide in the ſame Calling wherein he was called.*] Every one in the Sphere and Orb wherein Providence hath fixed him muſt act, move and influence. Serve God with Conſtancy both in your general and particular Calling. This is Chriſtianity, and this will bring a Bleſſing upon you and yours.

Remember that Chriſtianity is a Warfare; you are all Soldiers of Chriſt Jeſus; you muſt fight under his Banner, and that to the laſt. You muſt not cowardly leave your Stations, or quit the Ground which your great General hath ſet you. And if you act thus, altho' you be wounded, and die in the Field of Battle, be it known to you that you fall honourably, and you expire with unutterable Joys and Solaces in your own Conſciences. There cannot be any thing more comfortable to you than to live and die in the faithful Diſcharge of your proper Functions. This will be your Safety and Protection.

And thus you ſee what it is to be [*ſo doing*;] you are to devote yourſelves to ſerious Meditation, to pious Purpoſes and Reſolutions; you are to be inſtant in Prayer, and ſo to be found breathing out your Souls to God who firſt breath'd them into you: You muſt be heartily ſorry for your paſt Follies and Miſcarriages, and earneſtly implore the Divine Mercy. You muſt delight yourſelves in reading and hearing the Word of God, in obſerving all Chriſt's Inſtitutions and Appointments which he hath left with his Church, which are Means to convey Grace into your Souls. You muſt take Pleaſure in the charitable Offices which you are to perform to your Brethren. *To do Good and to communicate forget not, for with ſuch* evangelical *Sacrifices God is well pleas'd.* In a Word, act faithfully in your ſeveral particular Callings and Employments which God's Providence hath placed you in. This will adminiſter unſpeakable Comforts to you when you come to leave the World. Then you may ſay with old *Simeon* [*Now letteſt thou thy Servant depart in Peace.*] Or, you may breathe out your laſt with Holy *Stephen*, [*Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit.*] Thus I have put you into a Way how you may be doing your Maſter's Work, and meet the Bridegroom of your Souls with Joy. Oh let my Soul thus take Leave of the World, and may all yours do ſo too!

I proceed to the third Remark upon the Words, *viz.* That our Lord will come, and take an Account of what we have done. The Maſter will come and viſit his Servants whom he had ſet on work. My Brethren, our Lord obſerves, and minds what we do; he takes Notice whether we be idle or watchful, whether we buſy ourſelves about his Work or Satan's. And it will not be long before he comes, and reckons with us for all our paſt Demeanour. The Days of accounting are theſe two, *Death* and the *Laſt Judgment.* Theſe are the ſet Times of our Lord's coming, and none can reverſe and eſcape them. Let then this be deeply impreſſed on your Minds, that Chriſt will arrive and make an Enquiry into your Lives and Actions. Alas! how ſeldom do Men think of this? Or if they do, what poor Effect and Influence hath it upon them?

But ſhall I deſire you to remember this ſeriouſly, that the Grand Aſſizes are approaching, and that the Judge will be here ſhortly. The Lord is coming to you, to every one that hears me, or that hears me not. O think with yourſelves, that you heard the Lord uttering theſe Words, [*Give an account of thy Steward-*

Stewardſhip, for thou ſhalt be no longer Steward.] Often read and meditate on the Apoſtle's Words in 2 *Cor.* v. 10. [*We muſt all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the Things done in his Body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad*]. Do we mind what this great Apoſtle here ſaith, and do we really believe it? Whether we do or no, it is infallibly true, and the World ſhall one Day find it to be ſo.

THE voluptuous and debauched Perſon muſt appear before that great Tribunal, and give an account of his wild and brutiſh Deportment: The unclean Perſon, who ſhunned the Light, and thought to conceal his Folly by Darkneſs and Retirements, muſt then appear and ſtand out in the open View of the World, and be accountable for his lewd and laſcivious Practices. The prophane Swearer, who blaſphemed the holy Name of God and his Son Jeſus, muſt then bow and proſtrate himſelf to him whom he before prophaned. The mighty Oppreſſor, who eſcaped here the earthly Judge, and by his Wealth and Power made himſelf too great for humane Judicature, muſt ſtand at that great Bar, and ſubmit to the fatal Sentence. The Hypocrite, who thought to deceive God as well as his Neighbours, ſhall appear then in his true Shape, which he never did before. The uncharitable Man, the Fomenter of Strife and Diſcord, the Man that haled others before the Judge, muſt himſelf appear before the Judge of Heaven and Earth, and anſwer for all his unchriſtian and unbrotherly Behaviour. That's the third Remark on the Words, Chriſt our great Lord will come and call his Servants to an Account, that they may both anſwer and receive according to what they have done.

WHICH brings me to the fourth and laſt Obſervation, *viz.* That thoſe Servants whom Chriſt at his coming ſhall find about his Work and Buſineſs are in a *bleſſed* and *happy* Condition. For, firſt, How comfortable muſt it needs be to a holy Perſon, that he hath not only all his Life-time endeavoured ſincerely to ſerve his God, and to do all the Good he could in the World, but that by God's Grace aſſiſting him, he hath perſevered in the ſame Courſe until Death? and now, that he is to depart this Life, he is not employed in the Works of Darkneſs, he is not diſpleaſing God, and offending good Men, but he is about his Maſter's Buſineſs, and he expires his laſt Breath in the diſcharge of his Duty. *Bleſſedneſs* is entailed on the Servant who thus behaves himſelf.

IF you conſider the Nature of the Thing it ſelf, it cannot be otherwiſe, for he being made by God to ſerve him, and to be wholly at his beck and diſpoſal, it muſt needs be that his *Satisfaction* and *Happineſs* ſhould conſiſt in conforming himſelf to God's Will, and in acting according to his Laws and Commands.

I may add likewiſe, that God will protect his Servants in the diſcharge of his own Work. They are ſafe whilſt they are doing what he ſets them about. Come what will, they cannot be miſerable.

Yea, in the Verſe immediately after the Text they are aſſured of Reward and Happineſs. [*Of a Truth I ſay unto you, that he will make him Ruler over all that he hath.*] As the Servant who is faithful in his Lord's Buſineſs is preferred, and rewarded with ſome greater Office and Dignity, ſo ſhall the true Chriſtian, who hath diſcharged his Duty aright, and is found about Chriſt's Work when he comes; he ſhall be abundantly recompenſed for his Diligence and Faithfulneſs. Beſides that, the good Man had a Reward in his very Duty, and that when he acted for God he began to be in Heaven here on Earth, he ſhall alſo actually be taken up into Glory, to the beatifick Viſion of God, to the Aſſembly of Saints and Angels, and to the Participation of endleſs Happineſs. [*Well done, good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord,*] that is the chearing Language he ſhall hear at the appearing of his Lord. [*Come you, bleſſed of my Father, receive the Kingdom prepared for you:*] With ſuch joyful Expreſſions will Chriſt entertain him, with ſuch gracious Words will he bid him welcome to the Manſions of Glory. And thus you have it very briefly demonſtrated, that it is *happy*, thrice happy for that Servant, that Chriſtian, who (when Death or Judgment ſeize on him) is performing his Maſter's Will and Pleaſure. [*Bleſſed is that Servant whom his Lord*, &c.]

And now if *Bleſſedneſs* be the Portion of ſuch Servants that are employed, and well employed, you may imagine what a *Curſe*, what a *Judgment* attends thoſe who are doing nothing: But much more curſed may you gueſs their Condition to be who are wholly taken up with the Service of Satan, and go out of the World in that Employment. Oh! that I could affect your Hearts with the ſad and forlorn State of ſuch Perſons. To this purpoſe I pray read the 45th and 46th *verſes* of this Chapter, which are a direct Antitheſis to my Text. [*But and if that Servant ſay in his Heart, my Lord delayeth his coming, and ſhall begin to beat the Men-ſervants and Maidens, and to eat and drink and to be drunken; the Lord of that Servant will come in a Day when he looketh not for him, and at an Hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in ſunder, and will appoint him his Portion with the Unbelievers*]. If we begin to beat the Servants, *i. e.* to domineer over, and fall out with our Fellow-ſervants and Brethren, if we wrangle and quarrel, and ſow the Seeds of Strife and Diſſention among one another, and keep up unchriſtian Feuds and Animoſities; if we begin to eat and drink, and to be drunken, *i. e.* if we abuſe God's Creatures, and ſpend the good Things he beſtows upon us in Riot and Luxury, and make them adminiſter to Luſt and Vanity, then our Condition will be unavoidably miſerable, and our Portion will be with damned Souls.

And yet how ſad is it to conſider, that Men every where indulge their Luſts, and live as if they ſhould never die, or that after Death they ſhould never be called to an account? Thus did thoſe Sinners of the old World behave themſelves in the Days of *Noah*, as you may inform yourſelves in *Mat.* xxiv. 37, 38, 39. [*They were eating and drinking, and marrying and giving in marriage.*] This was objected to them as their high Miſdemeanour: And the following Words explain it, which tell us, that they did theſe things when they ſhould have been doing ſomething elſe. They ſhould have hearkned to *Noah*, who preached near ſixſcore Years together to them, and freely laid their Sins before them, and warned them of God's Judgments, which would certainly overtake them unleſs they repented, and turned from their evil Ways. The very Building of the Ark was a viſible Sermon; yet they went on ſecure and unmoved, and minded not the approaching Deluge, and ſo were deſervedly ſwept away by it.

Consider (my Brethren) how ſad and dreadful it is to be ſurprized in the very commiſſion of Sin, to be arreſted in the very acting of Vice. How direful muſt their Condition be who thus take their Leave of the World? How affrighted are their Souls? How terrible is their Paſſage hence, and their Appearance in another Place? Let us all be exhorted then to be doing our Maſter's Will and Work. Let this be our chief and only Care whilſt we ſojourn in theſe Houſes of Clay. Suffer me to addreſs this Part of my Diſcourſe to all Ranks and Conditions of Men.

1. *MAGISTRATES* and *Governors*, and ſuch as are in Authority, are principally concerned in this Duty. *It behoves an Emperor and Commander to dye ſtanding*, was the Motto of *Flavius Veſpaſian*. The ſame *Roman* Hiſtory tells us, that *Severus* the Emperor, who was inured to continual Action in his Life, at laſt Gaſp cried out, *And is their any thing for me to do now?* And I remember our *Engliſh* Chronicles tell us, that *Syward*, the martial Earl of *Northumberland*, feeling that he drew towards his End, aroſe out of his Bed, and put on his Armour, ſaying, *That it became not a valiant Man to dye lying*, and ſo he gave up the Ghoſt ſtanding. In a reſembling Sort our Hiſtories acquaint us, that one of our *Engliſh* Kings a little before he died, as he lay in his Bed, gave order, that his Face ſhould be turned toward his Enemies, as ſcorning to turn his Back of them, though he were expiring.

These are brave Indications of *Valour* and *Greatneſs of Mind* in dying Princes; but ſuch great Perſons ſhould think themſelves obliged to give *daily* Inſtances of their active Spirit, but more eſpecially to exert their Vigour and Prowe ſs in the great Things which concern their Salvation and another World. All Men muſt be doing, but *theſe* more eſpecially: For as they have greater Honour and Dignity than others, ſo they ſhould outvy and ſurpaſs them in the extraordinary Greatneſs of their Actions. Thoſe that are in Authority have a wider Sphere to act in than inferior People; and if they ſtand ſtill, or move amiſs, they not only indamage themſelves, but attempt the ruin of the Community. *They* then are in a ſignal Manner to be employed, and that with the greateſt Exactneſs and Circumſpection.

If Superiors and thoſe in Place ſtudy the Glory of him who is greater and higher than they, if they perſevere in their Duty when they are aſſaulted and reviled, and reproachfully uſed, if they manfully outbrave all their Oppoſers, and Vice itſelf, then certainly, when it ſhall pleaſe God to call them hence, they will be able to quit their Charge with a ſerene and quiet Mind, and it will be a comfortable Reflection to them that they have ſerved God in their Place, and that it was their main Study to be always acting for him and the Advancement of his Glory; that as they had a greater Capacity of doing good, ſo their Endeavours and Enterprizes were proportionably greater than other Mens. [If this doth not reach ſome of you at preſent, it may (if you think fit to lodge it in your Memories) be ſerviceable to you hereafter, when God ſhall call you forth to the diſcharge of any publick Office and Truſt either in Church or State.]

2ly, *MINISTERS* and *Guides of Souls* are nearly concerned in my Text; they of all Perſons muſt be found *ſo doing*. You may obſerve therefore, that theſe Words ſeem to appertain in a ſingular manner to the Miniſters of the Goſpel, as you may gather from 41, 42 *v.* of this Chapter, (the Words immediately preceding the Text) [*Then* Peter *ſaid unto him*, *Lord*, *ſpeakeſt thou this Parable unto us* (us that are Apoſtles and Miniſters) *or even to all? And the Lord ſaid*, *who then is that faithful and wiſe Steward*, *whom his Lord ſhall make Ruler over his Houſehold*, *to give them their Portion of Meat in due Seaſon?*] And then follow the Words of the Text, [*Bleſſed is that Servant whom*, &c.]

Every Chriſtian is a Servant, but the *Miniſters* of the Goſpel are ſaid to be Stewards and Rulers of God's Houſhold: Theſe muſt ſee that none of the Family want; every Soul muſt have its Portion of ſpiritual Food in due Seaſon: The Man of God muſt herein approve himſelf a Workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, namely, in this, that he divides the Word of God aright, that he deals out to every one their proper and peculiar *Dimenſum*, that he declares the whole Council of God, and keeps back nothing which may be profitable to the Souls of Men, that he reproves Sin undauntedly, and that he exhort unto Holineſs compaſſionately, that is, with an inward Love and Affection to Mens Souls, and with a pitying of their ſad Eſtate ſo long as they continue in their Sins. Bleſſed is that Servant, that Overſeer and Director of Souls, whom his Lord (the great Shepherd of the Sheep) when he cometh, ſhall find *ſo doing*. But how dreadful will be the Condition of that ſlothful and careleſs Shepherd, whoſe whole Study it is to feed himſelf and not his Flock, who warns not Sinners of the Danger they are in, and endeavours not to deliver them out of it?

3dly, You that are *Parents* and *Maſters of Families*, that are intruſted with a Charge either of Children or Servants, or both, read the Text often, and practice it. Bleſſed is that Parent, that Maſter, whom the Lord when he cometh ſhall find diſcharging the particular Duty which belongs to him, *i. e.* bringing up his Children and Servants in the Fear and Nurture of the Lord, and in an Awe of Religion, inſtructing the Younger and confirming the Elder in the Principles of Chriſtianity, and in a Practice anſwerable unto them.

4thly, All that *excel others* either *in Gifts of Body or Mind*, or in the *good Things of this World*, are to give Ear to theſe Words of our Saviour, and to improve all the Gifts of God to their utmoſt Good and Welfare; for when they ſhall be called to an Account, they muſt anſwer for all thoſe Bleſſings and Favours wherein they outſhined other Men. You that are bred in great Towns and Corporations, and are bleſſed with an Opportunity of knowing more than others, and have attained to clearer Diſcoveries of your Duty than others, you ſhould be found extraordinarily watchful over your Ways, and accurate in your Lives, for your Sins are not after the Rate of other Mens. You cannot pretend Ignorance, you have Time and Leiſure to make an Enquiry into Truth, and to fix it effectually on your Minds, and you have all the Encouragements to draw it forth into your Practices. To you therefore *that know to do good and do it not*, *to you it is ſin*, Jam. iv. 17. or to go no further than this Chapter wherein the Text is (ver. 47, 48.) [*That ſervant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes. For unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall be much required, and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more*].

So you likewiſe whom God hath bleſſed with Wealth and Abundance, with plentiful Incomes and fair Revenues, you muſt do more than others. Your Lot is fallen to you in pleaſant Places, and you have a goodly Inheritance. Remember that the Poor and Needy (eſpecially thoſe of the *Houſhold of Faith*) are to be co-heirs with you. God hath given you the good Things of this World, that thoſe who are deprived of them may find Relief at your Hands.

Laſtly, My Text looks with a full Face wiſhly on *every one* of you here preſent, of what Quality and Degree ſoever. There is committed unto every private Chriſtian ſome Talent or other, and they muſt be careful to improve it, and to be always ready to meet their Lord who intruſted them with it. Let me beſeech you all ſo to walk as they that muſt give an Account of their Actions, as they that have innumerable Obligations to be wary and watchful, to be ſtrict and accurate; as they that live in this World at great Uncertainties, and know not but that they may expire the next Moment. It concerns you then to be vigilant, and to reckon every Moment your laſt, for you cannot tell but that it may prove ſo. [*Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning*] (as you read in the 35th Verſe of this Chapter.) The meaning is, be as Servants attending their Maſter's Buſineſs, ready to do any thing he enjoins them: And (as it follows) [*Be ye yourſelves like unto men that wait for the Lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.* [*Be ye therefore ready, for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not*, ver. 40.] There is then all the Reaſon imaginable that ye ſhould be perpetually on your Guard, waiting for the coming of your Lord.

The ſummary Application of all may be that of St. *Peter* in the 2d Epiſtle, Chap. 3: Ver. 11. *Seeing then that all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved* (ſeeing that the Day of the Lord approaches, and Chriſt will come to Judge thee ſpeedily, either at Death or at the laſt Judgment) *what manner of perſons ought ye to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs?* how examplary ſhould your Lives and Converſations be? how zealous ſhould you ſhew yourſelves in all the Exerciſes of Religion? Give me leave to *direct* you (as to this great Matter) in theſe few Words;

Firſt, Pray more fervently. Unite all your Forces now, and wreſtle with God, and cry mightily unto Him for yourſelves, for this place where you inhabit, and for the whole Land of your Nativity.

Secondly, Disengage your Affections more reſolvedly from the World. You are convinced by this time, ſurely, that the World is Vain and Uncertain: Doat not on its Enjoyments, ſink not your Souls into Earth, plung them not into the Mire, be indifferent as to all Things here below, and be ready to part with any of this World's Goods.

Thirdly, Oppose Vice more vigorouſly than ever, and the rather becauſe of thoſe many ſtrong Temptations you meet with in this degenerate and corrupted Age.

Fourthly, Breath after Heaven more paſſionately. Let the ill Things which you behold here below, be the Occaſion of raiſing your Thoughts and Deſires toward thoſe Manſions above where nothing inhabits but what is Pure and Holy.

Laſtly, Let your Lives and Actions acquaint the World how mindful you are of that great Account which you are to give at the coming of the Lord. Deſire to be found doing your Maſter's Work, and then be not ſollicitous about the Wages, but aſſure yourſelves that that will be a recompence far beyond your Thoughts and Wiſhes: Wherefore comfort one another with theſe Words.

DISCOURSES
On the AUXILIARY
GRACES
AND
DUTIES,
That is, the
Helps and Aſſiſtances
Which are ſerviceable towards the promoting of all other GRACES and DUTIES.

Printed in the Year, MDCCXXV.

THE

INTRODUCTION.

HAVING treated of the more *Direct* and *Immediate* DUTIES of Religion, both *General* and *Particular*, I come now to ſpeak of the *Auxiliary* Duties and Graces, that is, the *Helps* and *Aſſiſtances* which are to be made uſe of in order to the performing all other Duties. And as I ſhall treat of thoſe Proper *Helps* which are ſubſervient to Godlineſs, and promote Religion and Holineſs in our Hearts and Lives; ſo, on the other ſide, I will ſhew what are the *Impediments* and *Hindrances* of a Holy Life, thoſe *Blocks* which lye in our way to Religion; or rather, which Sinners wilfully throw in the way. I ſhall generally mix them together, as when I treat of *Meditation* and *Conſideration*, I ſhall ſpeak of *Inconſideration*; when I ſpeak of avoiding *Evil Company*, I ſhall ſhew the Benefit of

Religious Society; when I ſpeak of *Drunkenneſs*, I ſhall diſcover the Advantages of *Sobriety* and *Temperance* ; and ſo in the reſt.

The Particulars which I ſhall now diſtinctly inſiſt on, are theſe; Conſideration and Meditation ; Vows ; Watchfulneſs ; Shunning Evil Company ; Avoiding Gluttony and Drunkenneſs ; Setting before us the Brevity of Life, and the Certainty of Death ; Striving to enter in at the ſtreight Gate.

OF
Conſideration and *Meditation*;
Attended with
RESOLUTION.

Pſal. i. 2. *In his Law doth he meditate Day and Night.*
Hag. i. 5. *Conſider your ways.*
1 Tim. iv. 15. *Meditate on theſe things.*

IN treating of *Conſideration* and *Meditation*, I will firſt ſhew the *Nature* of this Religious Exerciſe: *Secondly*, I will diſcover the *Excellency* and *Uſefulneſs* of it: *Thirdly*, I will ſet before you the great *Miſchief* and *Danger* which accompany the Neglect of this Duty: *Fourthly* and *Laſtly*, I will give *Directions* for the right Managing it.

Firſt, As to the *Nature* of this Religious Exerciſe, to underſtand it the better, we may conſider *Meditation* as it is in ſome Reſpects different from *Conſideration*; and we may alſo take Notice of both of them as they do not differ from one another, but agree in the Main and Subſtance. *Meditation* ſeems to be of a higher Nature than *Conſideration*, for this Latter is an Operation of the Mind in order to Converſion, and Reformation of Life; but the Former is the continued Work of thoſe that are already changed in their Hearts and Lives, and have attained to ſome Improvements in Religion and Godlineſs. The one makes way for Godlineſs, the other advances it, and is ſerviceable to the perfecting it. Before we come to God, the Firſt is uſeful to prepare us: After we are come, the Second helps to confirm and eſtabliſh us. Beſides, This imports a greater Thoughtfulneſs than That: The Acts of the Mind pierce deeper, ſpread themſelves wider, and dwell longer on the Matter which is before it than *Conſideration*. In ſhort, *Meditation* includes in it *Conſideration*; but it is ſomething more, yea much more, for it is the higheſt Improvement of our Thoughts, and not only lightly tinctures the Soul with Religion, but gives a deep Senſe and Reliſh of it. And as they thus differ, ſo they agree in this, that they are both of them a ſerious Reflecting and Animadverting on thoſe Matters relating to Religion which are ſet before us, to the End that we may receive Advantage by fixing our Thoughts on them, and become thereby more pious and holy.

And now I cannot better explain the Nature of *Meditation*, which contains in it *Conſideration*, than by ſhewing what are the due and proper *Objects* of it; and how the Mind muſt be converſant about them. The Matter or Objects of our Meditation are, 1. *Ourſelves*. 2. *God*. 3. His *Word*. 4. His *Works*. 5. *Mens Actions*. 6. Thoſe ſolemn Entertainments of our Thoughts, which are commonly called the *Four Laſt Things*. Of theſe I will diſtinctly, but briefly ſpeak; and thereby diſplay the Nature and Quality of *Meditation*.

The firſt Act of Spiritual and Religious *Meditation* is looking into *Ourſelves*. The famous Moraliſt ſtiles it * a Retiring into One's ſelf; and the *Platoniſts* called it † the Soul's Converſing with itſelf, its Contemplating its own Nature, and Reflecting on its own Actions. This is the Firſt Work of Meditation, for it is by the Soul that we meditate, and therefore that which we are to do in the firſt Place is to deſcend into Ourſelves, and to be acquainted with the Powers of our Souls, and fully to underſtand the Operations of this noble Part of us, and to make continual Reflections on its Actions. Thus we ſhall experimentally know the Meaning of what a wiſe Man ſaid, That this was the Advantage he had by his Philoſophy, that * he could hold Converſe with himſelf; ſo that he needed not to look out for other Company. We have enough to do at home: We may ſufficiently employ ourſelves within doors, by being intimately acquainted with our own Breaſts. We may employ ourſelves in contemplating the ineſtimable Worth and Value of our Souls, and what is the great Buſineſs for which they were deſigned. We may maintain continual Soliloquies with our Minds, we may both queſtion and anſwer ourſelves about the grand Affairs of Religion, and the Things which appertain to our eternal Intereſt. We ought often to think that we have Souls that muſt be ſaved or damned for ever: We ought ſeriouſly to conſider, that the State we are now in is a State of Trial, in order to another World; and that therefore we muſt not ſit idle: We muſt always have it it in our Thoughts that we have a great deal of Work to do, and that it concerns us to do it well. Here is Matter worthy of our Meditation.

Secondly, The next Object of it is *God* and his *Attributes*, the Nature of God and his Divine Excellencies. Here is Scope for our ſublimeſt Thoughts, and moſt exalted Contemplations. The glorious Eſſence of God diſcovers itſelf in ſuch Properties as theſe, (all which require a diſtinct and particular Contemplation): His *Omnipotency*, whereby he created the World, and continually maintains it in its Being; and every Moment gives us Demonſtrations of his invincible Power and Sovereignty: His *Omniſciency*, whereby he not only takes Notice of all Events and Tranſactions that happen thro' the whole World, but hath a perfect Foreſight and Knowledge of them before they come to paſs: His *Wiſdom*, whereby he ſo governs and diſpoſes all Things, that they ultimately conduce to his Glory, and the Good and Welfare of Mankind: His *Goodneſs* and *Mercifulneſs*, whereby he ſhews himſelf kind to all his Creatures, but more eſpecially to his Elect: His *Juſtice*, whereby he ſeverely animadverts on thoſe that tranſgreſs his Laws; for we are to know, that as God is our beſt Friend, if we comply with his holy Will, ſo he is our worſt Enemy, if we wilfully diſpleaſe him: His *Eternity*, whereby his Exiſtence differs from that of his Creatures, they having a Beginning of their Being, but he none: His *Immenſity* and *Omnipreſence*, whereby he fills all Places, but is contained in none: His *Immutability*, whereby he is always the ſame, without any Variableneſs or Shadow of Change. Thus we ought to meditate on God, who tranſcends all other Things that we can fix our Minds upon.

Thirdly, The *Word of God*, the *Holy Scriptures*, are the proper Matter of our Meditation. Thus the *Law of the Lord* is particularly mentioned in that Text, *Pſal.* i. 2. and 'tis Part of the Deſcription of the *Bleſſed Man*, that he meditates on it. And in *Pſal.* cxix. he no leſs than ſeven Times declares that he doth, and that he will *meditate* on God's *Precepts*, his *Statutes*, his *Word*, his *Law*, his *Teſtimonies*, *v.* 15, 23, 48, 78, 97, 99, 148. This is that which *Joſhua* was commanded by God to obſerve, namely, to *meditate on the Book of the Law Day and Night*, *Joſ.* i. 8. And this is that Task which we muſt be employed in; we muſt not only deſcend into ourſelves, and aſcend up to God

* Ἐις ἑαυτὸν ἀναχωρεῖν.
† ἡ καθ' αὑτὴν ψυχή.

* Τὸ δύνασθαι ἑαυτῷ ὁμιλεῖν. *Laert. in Antiſthene.* [vide.]

God, with our raiſed Thoughts, (as hath been ſaid already) but we muſt look into the Law and into the Teſtimony, into the Sacred Records of the *Old Teſtament*; and more eſpecially into the Evangelical Law contained in the Writings of the *New Teſtament*. Here is abundant Matter for our Study and Meditation: Here we are entertained with *Hiſtory*, the antienteſt in the World, and on the Truth and Authority of which we may entirely depend. And beſides we may, if we have learnt the Skill, turn all the Hiſtorical Part of the Scripture into Matter of Piety, by taking it in a *Tropological* Senſe, as the Schoolmen call it. The Letter, or bare Hiſtory, is to remain ſtill; that is by no means to be null'd: But this is that I offer, That beſides the literal, there may be an allegorical Uſe made of the Sacred Writings. This is a Moralizing of the Hiſtorical Paſſages of the Bible. *Philo* the *Jew* is excellent at this, in many Places of his Works. This is alſo performed very laudably by *Gregory Nyſſen* in his Piece *of Moſes's Life*, where he admirably deſcants on all the Particulars of that Relation, and preſents us with a moral or ſpiritual Senſe of them. Again, in theſe inſpired Writings we are entertained with thoſe ſublime *Doctrines*, thoſe divine and heavenly *Verities*, which are not to be found in the Volumes of other Authors. Here are *Precepts* and *Commands*, and Rules of Life, ſuch as none of the Maſters of Ethicks could ever arrive to. Here are *Promiſes* to ſolace and refreſh our Minds: Here are *Menaces* to rouze and terrify us: In a word, here is every Thing that is worthy of our Contemplation.

Fourthly, Not only God's Word but his *Works* are the deſerved Objects of our Meditation. Theſe are Threefold, namely, of Creation, Providence, and Redemption I begin firſt with the Works of the *Creation*. You have the whole World to feed your Thoughts, you may rove over the Univerſe: It all furniſhes you with rich Materials of Contemplation. Lift up your Eyes towards the Heavens, for *they declare the Glory of God*, and *the Firmament ſheweth his handy Work*; wherefore theſe are to be looked upon, and with profound Conſideration taken Notice of by us. Herein we have the Pſalmiſts pious Example before us, who often makes mention of the glorious Structure of the heavenly Bodies, and makes the Contemplation of them ſerviceable to very holy Purpoſes. I will inſtance in one Place only, *Pſal.* viii. 3, 4. *When I conſider thy Heavens*, (*Thine*, becauſe they could not be made by any but Thee) *the Work of thy Fingers*, *the Moon and the Stars*, (both Fixed and Planetary) *which thou haſt ordained*; then I cry out, (for theſe Words are to be inſerted in this Place) *What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the ſon of Man that thou viſiteſt him?* That is, thou art ſo good and merciful to him as to vouchſafe him the Benefit and Influence of thoſe celeſtial Bodies, that thou art ſo bountiful and gracious to him, as to create the Heavens for his Good and Welfare. And at other Times this holy Man makes theſe an Occaſion of magnifying Gods *Almighty Power* and *Wiſdom*; for theſe (as well as his Goodneſs and Bounty) are to be ſeen and plainly diſcerned in the heavenly Fabrick. This made the *Pythagoreans* (as a great * Philoſopher tells us) adviſe Men to look up to the Heavens, and to obſerve the Order and Conſtant Courſe of the bright Luminaries placed there, becauſe thoſe illuſtrious Spectacles are viſible Arguments and ſhining Demonſtrations of the greater Glory of him that made them.

* *Antonin.* lib. 11.

And not only the heavenly Bodies, but the Air, the Earth, the Sea, and all the Things contained in them are new Themes to entertain your Thoughts. Even theſe inanimate and ſenſeleſs Creatures proclaim a divine Author and Benefactor. *By theſe Things that are made*, and are viſible, *the inviſible Things of God*, that is, his Power, and Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, *are clearly ſeen and underſtood*, Rom. i. 20. The Footſteps of the Godhead are plainly diſcernable in all theſe, if we conſider their admirable Compoſure and Frame, and the excellent Ends and Uſes for which they are made.

But more ſignally theſe may be obſerved in thoſe Creatures that are endued with Senſe and Life: Their whole Compoſition taken together, and every Part of them ſeparately, are evident Teſtimonies of the infinite Skill of the great Architect who framed them, and fitted them for their ſeveral Purpoſes. A Man may ſee the infinite Power and Wiſdom of the Creator in the Fabrick of a Flie, in the wonderful Make and Contexture of the leaſt and meaneſt Animals, of the moſt contemptible Inſects. And when we reflect on the *manifold Uſefulneſs* of theſe, and all the other inanimate as well as living Creatures; their Serviceableneſs to us upon ſundry and various Accounts; when we conſider how, in their ſeveral Natures and Capacities, they are differently advantagious to us, and even needful and neceſſary for us, we have then farther Ground of admiring the divine Goodneſs and Philanthropy, and of praiſing and extolling the Great, and Wiſe, and Bountiful Creator.

I might add this too, as no contemptible Matter for our Meditation; that even the Brute Creatures teach us our Duty and Obedience to God. *The ox knows his owner*, Iſai. i. 3. that is, he is obſervant of him, and therein inſtructs his Maſter: Whence, perhaps, the ſame Word in the *Hebrew* ſignifies an *Ox* and a *Teacher*. It follows in the ſame Place, *The aſs knows his maſter's crib*, takes Notice of his Feeder, and thereby teaches him to be obſequious to his Great Maſter. *The ſtork knoweth her appointed time, and the turtle and the crane and the ſwallow obſerve the time of their coming*, Jer. viii. 7. and therein theſe Unreaſonable Creatures upbraid thoſe that are Reaſonable, for their diſregarding and neglecting the remarkable Seaſons of God's Providence, and of Grace and Mercy offered to them. *Solomon* ſends the *Sluggard* to the *Ant*; and our Saviour ſends his Followers to the *Serpent*, to learn Wiſdom and Prudence; and to the *Dove*, to learn Innocency and Harmleſsneſs. Something like this is to be obſerved in the *Hieroglyphicks* of the *Egyptians*, which were moſt of them borrowed from irrational Animals, either four-footed Beaſts, or Fowls, or Fiſhes.

But beſides the *Material* and *Viſible World*, there is another which is *Immaterial* and *Spiritual*; and conſequently *Inviſible*: And this affords freſh Occaſion of exerting this Duty which I am now diſcourſing of. There is the World of Spirits, of incorporeal Beings. God himſelf bleſſed for ever, who is an infinite and eternal Spirit, is the Head of them all: Next are Cherubims and Seraphims, Angels and Arch-angels, who are glorious Attendants on the Divine Majeſty; and, when there is Occaſion, are miniſtring Spirits here on Earth. The infernal Spirits likewiſe (who were once in a happy State) belong to this Order and Rank of Beings. Likewiſe the Souls of Men, which differ from Angelick Spirits in this, that they are ſhut up in mortal Bodies for a Time. There are the Spirits of Brutes, and the vegetative Principles of Plants and Trees, which may be reckoned among immaterial Beings, but are of an inferiour Nature. All theſe are the Subject of our Study and Meditation. Of the Supreme, Infinite, and Self-exiſtent Spirit, I have ſpoken already; ſetting him before you in his ſeveral Excellencies and Attributes: I have alſo ſaid ſomething of the Nature and Excellency of Humane Souls: And if the Limits of this Diſcourſe would permit it, I might briefly glance on the other Ranks of finite Spirits, every one of which would adminiſter uſeful Matter to us: But I muſt not enlarge here, leſt I deprive you of other Particulars which I deſign you. And truly it may ſuffice at preſent, that I have ſet before you thoſe particular Subjects, under this general Head, which are to be made Uſe of by you in your Meditations.

Next to the Works of the *Creation*, thoſe of *Providence* are to be conſidered by us. And here firſt the General and Catholick Providence of the Almighty is to be taken Notice of; that Providence which extends itſelf both to Good and Bad Men. Of this the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, *Pſal.* cxlv. 15. *The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou giveſt them their meat* (their convenient Allowance and Proviſion) *in due ſeaſon: Thou openeſt thy hand and ſatisfieſt the deſire of every living thing*. This Providence concerns itſelf for the Brutes as well as rational Creatures, *Pſal.* xxxvi. 6. *Thou preſerveſt man and beaſt*. The whole civ*th Pſalm* is an entire Meditation on this extenſive and wonderful Theme.

Of this univerſal Care, which God hath of the World, the Apoſtle ſpeaks in *Acts* xiv. 17. *He left not himſelf without witneſs, in that he did good, and gave them rain from heaven and fruitful ſeaſons, filling their hearts with food and gladneſs*. This common and large Proviſion, which is made for Mankind, may juſtly entertain our Thoughts. How pleaſant a Meditation is it to obſerve how the great Family of the World is taken Care of, and plentifully provided for!

But the *particular and ſpecial Providence* of Heaven is yet a more delightful Entertainment for our Thoughts. Tho' the great Houſeholder of the World is careful to ſupply the Wants of all his Servants and Retinue, yet in a peculiar and diſtinguiſhing manner he takes Care of his Children. Thus, in the forenamed *Pſalm*, 'tis added, in *v.* 18, 19, 20. *The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth: he will fulfil the deſire of them that fear him: he alſo will hear their cry, and will ſave them: The Lord preſerveth all them that love him*; that is, he doth all this in a ſingular and diſcriminating Way. His Church and choſen People are his Darlings, his Beloved, and there is a Love and Favour of a particular and extraordinary Nature ſhewed to them. A paternal Care and Tenderneſs runs thro' all the Occurrences and Events which concern them. This is a very entertaining and delectable Scene to exerciſe our Thoughts about; and therefore let us not forget to employ our Thoughts here: Let us, with Wonder and Amazement, take Notice of God's Love to his peculiar People, of his gracious conferring the choiceſt Bleſſings upon them, even ſuch as he denies to the reſt of Mankind.

Here likewiſe, the *Rewards* and *Puniſhments* which he hath appointed, with Reſpect to the Good and Bad, and that both in this Life and in that to come, are to be meditated upon by us, as an undeniable Teſtimony and Proof of the Divine Providence. Let us often bring into our Thoughts, that Recompence of Godlineſs and Righteouſneſs which good Men have in this World. Beſides the Love of their heavenly Father, (which was mentioned before) they are rewarded with the Serenity of their Conſciences, with the Love and Honour which all righteous Men bear to them, with the great Advantage which all their Afflictions bring to them; for this is peculiar to them that they gain by their Loſſes, and their very Diſappointments and Troubles are profitable to them. Yea, in whatſoever State they are, they have Ground of Rejoycing; for a Bleſſing attends them thro' the whole Courſe of their Lives. In ſhort, if *we mark the perfect Man and behold the Upright*, we ſhall find that not only the Beginning and Progreſs, but *the End of that Man is Peace*, Pſal. xxxvii. 37. But let us contemplate next the Providence of the great Governour of the World in inflicting *Puniſhments* as well as *Rewards*. As theſe latter are the Portion of the Righteous, ſo thoſe are of the Wicked. Their whole Life (as gay and ſplendid as it may ſeem to be) is a continued Penalty, for they ever carry about with them their Plague and Torment. *They are like the troubled Sea, which cannot reſt, but caſts up Mire and Dirt.* In the Midſt of their greateſt Revels their Hearts are ſorrowful; at leaſt they are ſo when they have Time to conſider, that all Diſpenſations of Heaven, towards them, are, by their own voluntary Fault, turned into Judgements and Curſes. O that we could revolve this ſufficiently in our Thoughts.

And then we are further to remember, that their ſevereſt Puniſhment is yet to come: This (as well as the other Conſideration) is an unqueſtionable Argument of God's juſt and wiſe Management, and therefore the Contemplation of it is worthy of all ſerious Minds: And particularly 'tis a great Support to thoſe who are tempted to call in queſtion the Divine Adminiſtration of Things. For what tho' wicked Men ſeem to go unpuniſhed in this Life? Let us not thence reproach the Government and Diſpenſation of Heaven, but have this in our Thoughts, that the greateſt and heavieſt Part of the Puniſhment of moſt Tranſgreſſors is deferred 'till an other Life. To conclude, What a comfortable Thought and Reflection is this, that there is, and ever ſhall be, a careful Providence that governs the World, and all men in it; that, notwithſtanding the Uncertainty of all mundane Events, notwithſtanding the ſtrange Viciſſitudes and ſurprizing Changes that we obſerve, God rules among the Children of Men? This is a Meditation that well becomes us, becauſe it is ſo ſerviceable to bring Glory and Honour to our Great Lord and Sovereign.

After we have meditated on the *Works of the Creation*, and of *Providence*, let us, in the next Place, advance to a higher and nobler Theme; the Works of *Redemption*. Here we ſhall have Occaſion to cry out with the Apoſtle, *O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God!* To conduct

your

your Thoughts aright in this great Myſtery, you may proceed after this Manner. Firſt, think of the *Perſon* who was the bleſſed Undertaker of our Redemption; then of the *Undertaking itſelf*; after that of the *Duty on our Part*, which is conſequent of it.

Firſt, Seriouſly conſider *who* it was that undertook our Redemption and Reſtauration. It was not an Enterprize for a meer Man; yea, it was an Atchievement that ſurmounted the Ability of Angels. For when the infinite God was offended, it was not in the Power of any finite and created Being to make Satisfaction. *None can by any means redeem his Brother, nor give to God a Ranſom for him: For the Redemption of their Souls is precious, and it ceaſeth for ever*, Pſal. xlix. 7, 8. This was the ſole Work of the Son of God, the ſecond Perſon in the Holy Trinity; here is Matter for ſevere Contemplation, or rather Admiration and Aſtoniſhment.

Go on, and meditate on the *Undertaking itſelf*. And here, that you may lay your Foundation right, let your Thoughts be employed about the miſerable and wretched State that all Mankind is in by Nature; conſider how, by the wilful Apoſtacy of our firſt Parents, we are all defiled with Sin, and are become guilty, and thereby obnoxious to the Divine Wrath, and to Miſeries of all Kinds. Thus being acquainted with our Malady, our original Diſeaſe, we come to know the Nature of our Cure; which is wrought by Jeſus Chriſt. His Work was to remove our Pollution and Defilement; and then our Guilt and Obnoxiouſneſs to Puniſhment; and to put us into a State of Salvation and Happineſs. Juſtification and Adoption, Acceptance of our Prayers, the Aſſiſtance of the Spirit, the Favour of God, and Eternal Glory in the Manſions above, are the bleſſed Fruit of the Redemption which I am ſpeaking of. Let not our Minds then be tired whilſt we are tracing theſe bleſſed Footſteps of the Divine Goodneſs; and of our Lord's Love to his Elect. Now, if ever, let us keep up our Thoughts, and exert them with Vigour and Livelineſs. Shall not the Tidings of a Saviour, a Redeemer, be precious and welcome to us? We were loſt, but he found us: We were diſeaſed, but he came to heal us: We were Captives and Bondmen, but he undertook our Redemption and Releaſe: We were dead in Sins, but he reſtored Life to us: In brief, we were miſerable, but his Deſign of coming was to make us happy.

We may further advance our Meditations, by calling to Mind the particular Manner of his Undertaking for the Sons of Men; how he vouchſafed to cloath himſelf with Fleſh, and to aſſume our humane Nature; how he was pleaſed to live a poor mean Life, and to ſuffer a painful and ignominious Death for our Sake, and in our Stead: How by his infinite and irreſiſtible Power he roſe from the Dead, and in a ſhort Time after aſcended into Heaven; and ſoon after that ſent his Holy Spirit to endow his Apoſtles with extraordinary Gifts; and to inſpire his Church with all Gifts and Graces. Theſe are thoſe great and aſtoniſhing Things which even the glorious *Angels deſire to look into:* Much more is it *our* Buſineſs and Employment to ſearch into, and be acquainted with them.

And *Laſtly*, we are to conſider what is our *Duty* with Relation to this glorious and ſucceſsful Undertaking. *We are bought with a price: therefore* (as the Apoſtle infers) *we muſt glorify God in our body and in our ſpirit, which are Gods*, 1 Cor. vi. 20. The moſt profound Thankfulneſs is a Tribute due on this Occaſion: And this Thankfulneſs, backed with Obedience and Holineſs of Life, will demonſtrate how efficacious our Lord's Undertaking hath been. The Freeneſs of this Redemption doth not exempt us from performing our Part; yea, it is a great Obligation upon us to be very zealous and forward in complying with the Commands of our Redeemer. Let us therefore often be thinking of this, what our Lord requires of us, what his Laws dictate to us, and what the Chriſtian Religion exacts of us.

Fifthly, To come down lower, not only *God's Works*, (as you have heard) but *Man's Works* and *Actions*, and the *uſual Affairs and Occurrences of their Lives* are Matter of a Chriſtian's Meditation. I will here briefly mention firſt the Works of *Art*; as the raviſhing Notes and Compoſures in Muſick, the curious Contrivances in Architecture, the Variety of mechanical Operations, and the many exquiſite Inventions for the Uſe of Man's Life: For this is certain, that

God's Wiſdom is ſeen in the Art of Men. It's ſaid even of the *Divine Wiſdom*, that *it dwells ſubtilly* (ſo 'tis in the *Hebrew*) *and finds out knowledge of witty inventions*, Prov. viii. 12. Again, the daily Actions, and the moſt ordinary Occurrences of our Lives, may ſuggeſt pious Thoughts to us. When a Man puts on his Garments in the Morning, he may be ſeaſonably reminded of the Spiritual Cloathing and Adorning with the Graces of the Holy Spirit; which, in Scripture, are frequently compared to *Cloathing*. When he uncloaths himſelf at Night, he may think of the Putting off his Garment of Fleſh. When he takes his Food and Repaſt, and partakes of the Refreſhments of this Life, he may thence reflect on the Spiritual Food and Nouriſhment which the Holy Scripture ſpeaks of: For the Comforts that attend Religion and a Holy Life, are expreſſed by Meat and Drink; and Jeſus Chriſt is called by himſelf *the Bread of Life*: When he lies down to take his Repoſe and Sleep, he may not unſeaſonably think of his Laſt Sleep, the Sleep of Death: So when he awakes and riſes in the Morning, this may invite him to think of the General Reſurrection. When Darkneſs and Night overtakes us, this may ſuggeſt to our Minds the diſmal Effects of Spiritual Darkneſs; and more eſpecially Everlaſting Darkneſs. When the Day appears, or when a Light is brought in, we may be reminded of the Light of Grace and Glory ſo often mentioned in the Word of God. Thus we read, in the firſt Ages of the Church, it was a Cuſtom to ſay a ſhort Prayer, and give Thanks to God at the lighting up of Candles. I have, in theſe few Inſtances, ſhewed how we may take Advantage of devout and pious Meditation, from the common and uſual Occurrences of our Lives: And this hath been a Holy Exerciſe uſed by the faithful Servants of God.

Moreover, the *Ordinary Callings* and *Profeſſions of Men* may adminiſter good and edifying Thoughts to us. We ſee that the Employment of a *Shepherd* is frequently made Uſe of in Scripture to ſet forth the Duty of religious Perſons; yea, to expreſs the fatherly Care and Providence of the Almighty. The whole xxiii*d Pſalm* is the Proſecution of this Metaphor. It is one entire Allegory of a *Shepherd*, who hath a tender Care of his Flock. And this Pſalm of *David* is the more remarkable, becauſe it hath Reference to that Employment which he himſelf formerly followed: He had been a *Shepherd*, and now that Profeſſion affords him Matter for pious Meditation. The Task of a Shepherd is Fourfold; to Feed, to Heal, to Guide, to Defend the Flock. All theſe are particularly and diſtinctly mentioned in this excellent Hymn, or Paſtoral Song of the Prophet *David*; and are applied unto God.

The Firſt is thus generally expreſſed in the firſt Verſe, *The Lord is my ſhepherd*, or according to the *Hebrew*, *Jehovah feedeth me*: Becauſe the main Office of a Shepherd is to feed his Sheep; therefore in the holy Language a Shepherd is called a Feeder. This is fitly and properly ſpoken of God, for *the eyes of all wait upon him, and he giveth them their meat in due ſeaſon: he opens his hand, and ſatisfies the deſire of every living thing*, Pſal. cxlv. 15, 16. And he that is thus univerſally kind, and *provideth for the ravens when they cry*, doth more particularly feed his own Children and Servants. This was ſignally made good to the Patriarchs, and to the People of *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs: The Clouds dropt down Manna, and the Rock ſent forth Water; the one to ſatisfy their Hunger, the other to allay their Thirſt. And this Care of feeding his Servants extends not only to their Bodies but to their Souls, which he nouriſheth and ſtrengtheneth with his Word, and with all the other Means of Grace. Which is further expreſſed by our Pſalmiſt in this three and twentieth *Pſalm*, *v.* 2. *he maketh me to lie down in green paſtures, he leadeth me beſide the ſtill waters.*

The ſecond Employment of a Shepherd is *Healing the Flock*, which is ſignified by that which the Pſalmiſt adds in *v.* 3. *Hc reſtoreth my ſoul*, in Oppoſition to the Character of an evil Shepherd, who *heals not that which is broken*, Zech. xi. 16. The great *Cure* that is wrought upon poor Penitents is by God's pardoning their Sins, and ſanctifying their Natures; and thus *he healeth all their diſeaſes*, as the Pſalmiſt gratefully acknowledges, *Pſal.* ciii. 3. God hath promiſed that *he will bind up that which was broken, and will ſtrengthen that which is ſick*, Ezek. xxxiv. 16. therein acting the Part of a good *Shepherd*, (to whom he compares himſelf in that Place) who hath a ſpecial Regard to thoſe of his Flock, that are feeble and infirm, and labour under any Malady. When the Soul is drooping and fainting, when the diſconſolate Mind is ſinking under its unſupportable Grievances, then the Goodneſs of God diſcovers itſelf in a more eminent Manner, by adminiſtring Conſolation: And when the Soul is as it were departing, it is called back again, retrieved and *reſtored.* This is the Purchaſe of Him who was the great Lover and Reſtorer of Souls, Chriſt Jeſus; and accordingly ſome of the *Jewiſh Rabbies*, and ſome of the moſt judicious *Fathers* of the Chriſtian Church agree in this, that this Pſalm hath its moſt eminent Completion in the *Meſſiah*, the great Shepherd and Biſhop of Souls. He came to ſeek and ſave that which is loſt, and *to bind up the broken-hearted*, as it was propheſied of him, *Eſai.* lxi. 1. to heal all the Maladies of diſeaſed Minds, *to reſtore the Soul* by the refreſhing Influences of his Spirit.

The next Office of this great Shepherd is *Guiding* his Flock, *v.* 3. *he leadeth me in the paths of righteouſneſs for his names ſake.* Which is parallel with that in *Pſal.* xxv. 8, 9. *Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach ſinners in the way: the meek will he guide in judgement, the meek will he teach his way.* Sheep are a Sort of * ſilly and ſhiftleſs Creatures, unable to manage themſelves: They ſoon go aſtray, and run into Danger. Such is the Nature of Mankind, and therefore juſtly and appoſitely they are compared frequently to this Kind of Animals, and are ſaid to *go aſtray like loſt Sheep.* They have need therefore of a merciful and faithful Guide, to lead them in the Paths of Righteouſneſs. This is effectually done by Chriſt Jeſus, who brings back his wandring Sheep, and conducts them in the right Way, and takes Care of them, and defends them from all Dangers. Which brings me to the next Particular.

The laſt neceſſary Action and Office of this Shepherd is the *Defending* and *Protecting of his Flock*, *v.* 4. *Tho' I walk thro' the valley of the ſhadow of death, thou art with me*, to guard and ſecure me from all Perils. *The Lord is a Sun and a Shield*, ſaith the ſame inſpired Poet, *Pſal.* lxxxiv. 11. He is a Sun for *Guidance* and *Direction*, (as was ſaid in the foregoing Particular) and a Shield for *Safety* and *Protection.* To this belongs what he further adds, *thou art with me, thy rod and thy ſtaff they comfort me:* By thoſe Paſtoral Inſtruments thou doſt protect and defend me. Or if we underſtand this rural Equipage in a larger Senſe, then by the *Rod* is meant God's *Governing* of his Flock, and by the *Staff* is meant his *Guarding* and *Securing* them; his not ſuffering them to be preyed upon by Wolves, his delivering his *Iſrael* out of all his Troubles. Thus we ſee how the holy Man frames a divine *Meditation* on the Reſemblance of God to a *Shepherd*, and is moſt devoutly employed in a uſeful Contemplation of his former Calling and Employment, and thereby teaches Men to take Advantage of pious Thoughts from all Things that may adminiſter Matter to them, even from their own Courſe of Life wherein Providence hath placed them: That by that Means there may be a happy Intercourſe between their General and Particular Calling.

So the Prophet *Amos*, who had been a *Herdſman*, forgot not his former ruſtick Life, and imagines himſelf among his Cattle and Beaſts ſtill; for he directs himſelf to the *Kine of Baſan*, and ſo makes his former Profeſſion ſerviceable to his preſent Purpoſe. Our Saviour taught his Diſciples to make the like pious Uſe of their Callings: As they had been *Fiſhers*, ſo he tells them that they ſhall henceforth be *fiſhers of men*, Mat. iv. 19. and *catch men*, Luke v. 10. Some think that when Chriſt exhorts his Hearers to *take his yoke upon them*, he alludes to his Trade of a Country Carpenter, Part of whoſe Employment it was to make Yokes. And it may be the Carpenters Trade is referred to when he ſaith, *The ax is laid to the root of the trees*, Mat. iii. 10. And perhaps it may be more than a Conjecture that St. *Paul*, who was a Tent-maker, glanced at that Calling, when he ſtiles our Bodies a *Tent* or *Tabernacle*, 2 Cor. v. 1, 4. How frequently do occur in the *Bible* Similitudes fetched from *Ploughing*, and *Sowing*, and *Reaping*, and other Works of Huſbandry, and from other Employments in common Uſe among Men? This is certain, that Thinking Minds may make uſeful Inferences, Applications, Compariſons and

Reflections,

* Τὸ προβάτων ἦθος ἀνόητον. *Ariſtot. de Animal.*

Reflections, from the particular Buſineſs and Work they are converſant about. The Gentleman, the Student, the Phyſician, the Lawyer, the Merchant, the Tradeſman, the Labourer, the Soldier, the Mariner, and Perſons of all Profeſſions and Vocations may make pious Improvements in this Kind.

Yet further, even *Sports* and *Games* are no unworthy Objects of a Chriſtian's Meditation. Thus Chriſt himſelf makes a religious Uſe of the Childrens Sports and Paſtimes, *This generation* (ſaith he) *is like unto children ſitting in the market, and calling to their fellows, and ſaying, We have piped unto you* (we have played merry Tunes) *and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you* (we have ſung mournful Songs) *and ye have not lamented*, Mat. xi. 16, 17. As grave and auſtere as our Saviour was, he diſdained not to mention Boys Play, and to apply it to the Men of that Age. Nothing is more frequent in St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles than religious Applications of the *Heathen Games* and *Prizes*, eſpecially the *Olympick* ones, which were the moſt renowned of all, and therefore exceedingly magnified and applauded, and with great Fondneſs and Exceſs made Uſe of by the *Grecians*. Theſe very Exerciſes the Apoſtle thought fit to mention in above thirty Places in his Writings, and makes them afford Matter of godly Meditation in ſeveral Reſpects. He preſents us with many ſerious, devout and heavenly Reflections, occaſioned by theſe *Pagan* Recreations. Theſe Heathen Paſtimes adminiſter to him Spiritual and Divine Obſervations. Thus we ſee how all Sorts of *Secular* and *Worldly Affairs*, and even *Sports*, yield ſomething worthy of our Meditation.

Here I will particularly and diſtinctly let you ſee how our Bleſſed Saviour, when he was on Earth, directed us by his own Example to this particular Practice of Meditation. Beſides the Inſtances already named, I will mention theſe that follow, and therein further ſhew what Improvement is to be made even of ordinary and common Objects, ſuch as we daily converſe with. A Woman of *Samaria* came to draw Water at the Well where Chriſt ſat, whereupon he took Occaſion to ſpeak of an other Water; *Living water which whoſoever drinketh of ſhall never thirſt, but it ſhall be in him a well of water ſpringing up into everlaſting life*, John iv. 10, 14. by which he meant the Holy Spirit and its Divine Graces, which are lively and active Principles of Holineſs that never fail, but endure to everlaſting Life. Such is this *Water* which our Saviour here commends, on the Occaſion of meeting the Woman that drew Water at the Well where he was. Again, when his Diſciples deſired him *to eat*, he directed their Thoughts, as well as his Speech, to an other Kind of Eating than they meant; *I have* (ſaith he) *meat to eat that ye know not of: my meat is to do the will of him that ſent me*, John iv. 31.

At another Time he took Occaſion from their talking of the *Harveſt*, to raiſe up their Hearts to the apprehending of another, that is, a Spiritual Harveſt. *Say ye not*, (ſaith he) *that there are yet four months to harveſt? Behold, I ſay unto you, the fields are white already to harveſt*, John iv. 35. If it were Four Months to Harveſt, the Corn could not be white: It is plain therefore, that from the Earth's Harveſt he paſſes to an other, the Spiritual one. Ye look for Harveſt Four Months hence, ſaith Chriſt, but I tell you the Harveſt is already, there is a great Forwardneſs among the People to receive the Goſpel: This Harveſt is *plenteous* at this Time, tho' *the labourers are few*, Mat. ix. 37. See another Example of this in *John* vi. 27. where we read, that our Saviour being found at *Capernaum*, by thoſe People whoſe Hunger he had a little before miraculouſly ſatisfied, he plainly tells them, that they follow him for the *Loaves*; and then accommodates his Speech to the preſent Occaſion, *Labour not for the meat which periſheth, but for the meat which endureth to everlaſting life*, that Meat which will ſatisfy the Appetites of the immortal Soul: And then he acquaints them, that he was *the bread of life*, and that *his fleſh was meat indeed. and his Blood drink indeed*, *v.* 48, 55. From feeding and refreſhing their Bodies he embraces a fit Opportunity of putting them in mind of the Proviſion they ſhould make for their Souls. So, when he ſaw the People buſy in fetching Water from the River *Siloah*, on the laſt Day of the Feaſt of Tabernacles, and pouring it out ſolemnly on the Altar, (as was the Cuſtom of the *Jews* from the firſt Inſtitution of that Feaſt, *Lev.* xxiii. 36.) he thereupon applies himſelf to them according to the Occaſion, crying out, *If any man thirſt,* *let him come unto me and drink*, John vii. 37. let him drink of that living Water which I commended to the *Samaritan* Woman. All Objects, all Events and Occurrences invite our Saviour to ſpiritualize them; and to turn temporal and ſenſual Things into ſomething that is divine and heavenly.

From the *waſhing* of *Cups* and *Platters*, he ſpeaks of inward Uncleanneſs and Pollution, *Mat.* xxiii. 25, 26. From his healing the *Dropſy* he takes Occaſion to reprove the *Phariſees* for their ſwelling Pride, which, like an Hydropick Humour had puffed them up, *Luke* xiv. 2, 7. From the Conſideration of God's *feeding the fowls of the air*, and *clothing the lillies of the field*, he convinces Men that they ſhall be ſupplied by God's Providence with Food and Rayment, and therefore ought to be content, *Mat.* vi. 26, 28. It is obſervable that the Generality of Chriſt's *Parables* are founded on common and obvious Things: Yea, we ſee that even in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, natural and ordinary Things are made Uſe of to teach us ſpiritual ones. It was the Will and Pleaſure of him that inſtituted it, that the uſual and common Elements of Bread and Wine ſhould repreſent to us his Body and Blood, and that ſtrengthning and refreſhing Virtue which is communicated thereby.

Thus our Lord himſelf hath taught us, by his own Example, to improve this Exerciſe of *Meditation*, by ſhewing us in particular Inſtances how it is to be done. And from all that I have ſuggeſted it is evident, that we do not want Matter for this excellent Employment. Whether we look above or below, whether we lift up our Eyes towards Heaven, or caſt them down towards the Earth; whether we take a View of natural or artificial Things, Things of God or of Men, ſuch as concern ourſelves or others, they all yield us Topicks for ſome pious Reflections. Mathematicians meaſure the Magnitude of the reſplendent Stars by the Shadow of the dark Earth: But a Chriſtian Man, by a more divine Art, makes earthly Things ſerviceable to thoſe that are heavenly, and hath a way of taking Meaſures concerning the one, from what he obſerves in the other. Nothing we deal with is ſo mean and barren as not to ſupply us with ſomething for uſeful Thoughts: There is no Object whatſoever but will adminiſter ſufficient Materials to a contemplative and pious Mind.

Sixthly, Meditate on the *Laſt Things*, Death and Judgement, Heaven and Hell. (*O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would* conſider *their latter end*) Deut. xxxii. 29. *Conſideration* here is of great Uſe and Neceſſity: Therefore accuſtom yourſelves to this; retire, and meditate on your Latter End. Say thus with yourſelves, Is this World but a Thoroughfare to another, muſt we within a ſhort Time be ſeparated from our Bodies, and leave this preſent Stage, and paſs to another; then why do we not fit ourſelves for ſuch a Change? We know not but we may this Day, this Hour, yea this Minute be removed hence. And are theſe Things ſo, then ask yourſelves whether ye can receive the Summons of Death with Comfort: Have ye made your Peace with the incenſed Majeſty of Heaven? Are ye provided of another Habitation when this ſhall be diſſolved? O think often and long upon theſe Things. Nay, if you did meditate every Day but a Quarter of an Hour on them, it would be of infinite Advantage to you. Beg of God that you may be made throughly ſenſible of the Brevity of your Life, and of the Uncertainty of your preſent State. Say with the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* xxxix. 4. *Make me to know my end, and the meaſure of my days, what it is: that I may know how frail I am*, how I am every Moment ſubject to the Aſſaults of Death.

In our Contemplations we may obſerve how frequently *Death* and *Sleep* are convertible Terms both in the *Old* and *New Teſtament*; and that the ſame *Hebrew* Word ſignifies a *Bed* and a *Bier*, 2 *Sam.* iii. 31. *Pſal.* vi. 6. xli. 3. *Am.* vi. 4. *Man lieth down*, Job. xiv. 12. that is, he *dieth*. The Grave is the Bed, and Death is Sleeping: And *Job* calls it *making his bed in the darkneſs*, Job xvii. 13. And it might be ſhewed here, that all *Nations* have agreed to expreſs Death by Sleep, if I had not attempted this already in * another Place. *Sleep* was one of the Things by which *Alexander* the Great ſaid he knew he was *mortal*. As I found him, ſo I left him, ſaid a great Commander, who found a Sentinel aſleep, and drew his Sword and killed him. In our vulgar Way of ſpeaking we call Midnight the *Dead Time* of the Night, perhaps becauſe then all are *aſleep* and at reſt.

* *Of the Stile of Scripture*, chap. 2. p. 88, 89.

Therefore it may be an agreeable Entertainment to our Thoughts to take Notice of the Affinity between theſe two, Sleep and Death. Firſt, the Univerſality of them is remarkable; as all Men ſleep, ſo all Men die: As all repair to their Beds, ſo all lye down in the Grave. Again, Sleep comes inſenſibly upon us, and ſeizes us unawares: Such, for the moſt part, is the Approach of Death; for tho' there are ſome Forerunners of it, yet the great and mortal Attack which ſeparates the Soul from the Body is ſurprizing. Likewiſe, in both there is a Ceſſation of Senſe and Motion. There are ſome bodily Diſtempers that are a Kind of Sleep, as *Lethargies*, *Apoplexies*, *Coma's*, ſome Sorts of *Palſies*, which prove mortal: So that without a Metaphor, and even in ſtrict Speaking, Death is a Sleep. Next, let me add that it is ſo, becauſe we ſhall one Day wake out of it as out of Sleep. All the Dead ſhall *Riſe* at the Laſt Day, which is called *Awaking*, *Pſal.* xvii. 15. Thus, in general, we ſee how fit the Reſemblance and Compariſon is; and from it we are prompted to think conſtantly of Death and Mortality, for we have every Night and every Morning this ſuggeſted to us, ſo that we need not K. *Philip*'s Boy to put us in Remembrance of it.

But more particularly the Death of the *Godly* is a Sleep, a quiet Reſt and Repoſe. As Sleep is for the refreſhing of the Spirits, and reſtoring the loſt Strength of the Body; ſo to the Righteous, who have ſpent their Days in religious Labour and Induſtry, Death is a Refection, a Renovation, a Reſtauration. Thus, in a higher Senſe than *Solomon* meant it, *the ſleep of a labouring man is ſweet.* They that *die in the Lord reſt from their labours*, and they awake and riſe with Vigour and Joy at the Reſurrection of the Juſt. Thus it is with them, and with them only; and therefore you may obſerve, that tho' in the *Old Teſtament Sleep* is applied promiſcuouſly to the Death both of the Good and Bad; yet in the *New Teſtament* 'tis applied only to the former. For by the Death of Chriſt *theirs* is ſanctified, and made the Gate of Eternal Life, and therefore may truly be ſtiled *Sleep*, a State of Refreſhment, Eaſe and Repoſe. Thus, from the Analogy between *Sleeping* and *Dying*, we have Matter afforded us for our Contemplation.

After Death comes the *Judgement*; which alſo is to be frequently revolved in your Thoughts. Often repreſent to your Imaginations the diſmal Scene of that Laſt Day: Think how impartial the Judge is before whom you muſt appear; think how ſtrict and ſevere the Inquiſition will be into all your Actions. And to aſſiſt your Meditations on this Theme, and to ſhew you how you may improve your Thoughts in that Way which I mentioned before, namely, the making of Common, Ordinary, and Earthly Things, ſubſervient to thoſe that are Spiritual and Divine, I will briefly explain and illuſtrate that excellent Compariſon which our Saviour made Uſe of to ſet forth the Nature of the laſt and general Judgement, *Mat.* xiii. 39. *The harveſt is the end of the world.* The final Cloſe and Conſummation of all Things, at the laſt, will be a *Harveſt* in divers Reſpects.

Firſt, At the Time of Harveſt all the Corn is *ripe*: So, in a reſembling Manner, all Men, at the Laſt Day, will be fit and ripe either for Salvation or Deſtruction. The Godly will then be ready for Glory and Happineſs; and the Wicked for Ruin and Miſery.

Secondly, Then the *Sithe* and the *Sickle* are employed, the Corn is cut down. So ſaith our Saviour, *Mark* iv. 29. *when the fruit is brought forth*, (or, as 'tis expreſſed in the foregoing Verſe, when *the full corn is in the ear*) *immediately he putteth in the ſickle, becauſe the harveſt is come.* When the Day of Judgement arrives, the Wicked ſhall ſtand no longer; their End is come: The Godly ſhall ſtay no longer on the Earth, their happy Period is arrived. So the Angel cried, *Rev.* xiv. 15. *Thruſt in thy ſickle, and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harveſt of the earth is ripe.* Which it is likely refers to *Joel* iii. 13. where are the ſame Words, and which you will find to be the Charge of God to the Angels, called his *mighty ones*, *v.* 11. for Chriſt hath told us that *the Reapers are the Angels.* For the Laſt Day's Work ſhall be by the Miniſtry of theſe glorious Spirits, they ſhall put in the Sickle, and reap the laſt Harveſt of the World: And theſe Reapers will do their Work ſo well that there will be no Gleaning after them.

Thirdly, At Harveſt is the *Gathering of the Fruits of the Earth*, and *Laying them up*. So it will be in Reſpect of the Godly and of the Wicked at the Laſt Day. The Former had been diſperſed here and there: In ſeveral Fields this Corn grew, but now it is gathered; and being ſo, it is laid in the Barn, for that is the Command given by Chriſt to his Angels, *gather the wheat into my barn*, Mat. xiii. 30. Heaven, and the many Manſions of it, muſt receive the Godly. *Father, I will that they whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am*, John xvii. 24. And as for the Wicked, they alſo ſhall be gathered, *Mat.* xiii. 41. *The Son of man ſhall ſend forth his angels, and they ſhall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity.*

Fourthly, As at Harveſt there is a Gathering, ſo there is a *Separating* and making a Difference. *In the time of the harveſt*, ſaith the Great Houſeholder and Husbandman, *I will ſay to the reapers, gather ye firſt the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the Wheat into my barn*, Mat. xiii. 30. And *v.* 39. *The tares are gathered and burnt in the fire: So ſhall it be in the end of the world.* In *v.* 43. 'tis added, *Then ſhall the righteous ſhine forth as the ſun, in the kingdom of their father.*

Which brings me to the *Fifth* Reſemblance between the Harveſt and the End of the World. *He that reapeth receiveth wages*, John. iv. 36. The Labourers in the Harveſt-work are recompenſed for their Pains; and ſo are the Righteous for their Labour of Love, and all their Works of Faith and Obedience. Here in this World ſome Largeſſes are beſtowed, ſome leſſer Rewards are diſtributed; but then is the great Day of Recompences, when *God will render to every man according to his deeds, to them who by patient continuance in well doing ſought for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that obeyed not the truth, but obeyed unrighteouſneſs, indignation and wrath*, Rom. ii. 6.

Sixthly, The Harveſt Time is the *Seaſon of Mirth and Joy*. For tho' we read in * *Diodorus Siculus*, † *Julius Firmicus*, and others that the *Egyptians* and *Phœnicians*, and ſome other *Gentiles* uſed to lament and mourn, and howl and weep at the Time of the gathering in the Fruits of the Earth, out of a ſuperſtitious and idolatrous Conceit that that was their beſt Way to conſecrate their Incomes to the Gods; yet among all other People, it hath been, and is otherwiſe; and the Harveſt is a Time of Gladneſs and Rejoycing, of Shouting and Acclamations. Thence it is ſignally and emphatically called *the Joy in Harveſt*, Iſai. xix. 3. And in this Reſpect *the End of the World* is deſervedly called *the Harveſt*; for tho' the Ungodly have no Reaſon to rejoyce then, but to lament with the moſt dreadful Lamentations, yet the Godly (who are the moſt conſiderable in this laſt Tranſaction of Things, and for whom this Day was chiefly appointed) had never ſuch Occaſion of Joy and Exultation as they have now. And thus you ſee how uſeful this *Seaſon*, and the *Employment* of it is to remind you of one of the moſt neceſſary Doctrines of Chriſtianity, that of the Laſt Judgement.

* *Hiſt.* lib. 1.

† *De Error. prophan. relig.*

And now let us proceed and meditate on what follows the Laſt Judgement, namely, the Joys of *Heaven*, or the Torments of *Hell*. Let us ponder it in our Minds, that we ſhall either be poſſeſſed of that perfect Bliſs and Happineſs which are in the Manſions of Glory, which are ſo great and raviſhing that it will be a kind of Heaven to us to meditate upon them: Or we ſhall be conſigned to that unſpeakable Woe and Miſery, which is the juſt Reward of impenitent Sinners, in the Regions of Darkneſs. And becauſe the *Eternity* of both of theſe States is that which makes the One ſo deſireable, and the Other ſo horrible; it will concern us to ſpend our Thoughts very plentifully upon *this*. I have in two diſtinct Diſcourſes treated of this Subject, and therefore I remit the Reader to them, and deſire him to furniſh himſelf with Matter thence for his ſerious Conſideration. And ſo I have diſpatched the *Firſt General* which I propounded; wherein I was to ſhew *the Nature of Meditation*, by aſſigning the proper *Heads* and *Objects* of it.

Secondly, I am to diſplay the *Worth* and *Excellency*, the vaſt *Uſefulneſs* and *Advantage* of Meditation. I have partly done this already, when I have been ſhewing that it is owing to this excellent Art that we are able to improve the Conſideration of the moſt trite, common and ordinary Objects to ſpiritual Ends and Purpoſes. But now I will in a more diſtinct manner ſet before you the ſeveral Particulars, whence you may be convinced how worthy and how uſeful an Employment this is.

1. The Worth and Excellency of it appears in this, that it is the proper Employment of rational Minds. The firſt Thing that falls under our Knowledge is, that we Think. For this is the principal Operation of reaſonable Creatures, and the very Top and Flower of humane Nature. Man is rightly ſaid by the Moraliſt to be a * Lover of Contemplation; yea, it is Thinking that denominates a Man. The inferiour Rank of Creatures is not capable of any ſuch Thing. Brutes cannot arrive to this noble Attainment: They are not endued with Faculties to reflect on themſelves, and to ponder what they do. But Man is made by God for this excellent Work, and is furniſhed with Powers on purpoſe to manage it aright. This is the ſole Prerogative of Man, it is the peculiar Embelliſhment of humane Minds. Then therefore we act like Men, and ſuitably to the Dignity of our Nature, when we are exerciſed in Thinking and Meditating.

2. This Exerciſe, well ordered, will baniſh Idleneſs and vain Diverſions. Many Perſons complain that their Time lies upon their Hands, and they know not how to diſpoſe of it; which makes them look out for impertinent Buſineſs, which puts them into a worſe State than if they were wholly idle. But if they were ſenſible of the excellent Nature of their Souls, and that they had Employment within themſelves, they would not throw away their precious Hours. This is the Excellency of a Man, that in the greateſt Ceſſation from worldly Buſineſs he can ſet himſelf on Work. By Virtue of this noble Endowment he ſuffers not the leaſt Portion of Time to be loſt, or to be miſpent. In the Intervals of Action all his Minutes are filled up; not with idle and vain Imaginations, but with holy and pious Thoughts. Thus both Vacancy of Thoughts (which prevails in ſome Men, who have ſtupified their Minds, or at leaſt have not made Uſe of them) and the Vanity of them are prevented. And moreover, trifling Paſtimes, and unlawful Recreations and Diverſions are laid aſide: For a good Man, by the Help of Meditation, knows how to exerciſe himſelf in Buſineſs of an other Nature.

3. The Advantage, and conſequently the Value of this Exerciſe is ſeen in this that it mightily improves the Faculties of the Soul. Knowledge, Reaſon, Judgement and a right Apprehenſion of Things, with Compoſedneſs and Conſiſtency of Mind, are the Fruits of it. *Logick* hath its Name among the *Hebrews* from a * Verb that ſignifies to *meditate*, becauſe this Operation of the Mind is very helpful to Right Reaſoning and Arguing. By the Aſſiſtance of this the Soul penetrates into the greateſt Depths, into the profoundeſt Myſteries. *I have more underſtanding than all my teachers*, yea, *than the ancients*, ſaith the Royal Pſalmiſt, and he gives the Reaſon why, *for thy teſtimonies are my meditation*, Pſal. cxix. My ſerious Pondering divine Things, and making them the conſtant Entertainment of my Mind, help me to a greater Degree of true Knowledge and Wiſdom, than the moſt experienced Men have attained to; which was partly underſtood by the *Platoniſts*, who were the moſt improved Sort of philoſophizing Men, they held that * none but pure and purged Minds can know God, and that there is no Arriving to this Knowledge unleſs the Mind be abſtracted from Senſe, and retire into Itſelf, and live upon the Contemplation of divine Things, which is effected by *Meditation*. This therefore may be truly ſaid to improve and exalt our Minds, and they that have no Skill in this, are very low and contemptible.

4. It wonderfully promotes all the Parts of Devotion and Religion. I will give you an Account of this in theſe Particulars briefly.

Firſt, It fixes the Mind, and thereby is uſeful to preſerve in us a conſtant Senſe of God on our Souls, and to keep up a ſteady Diſpoſition in our Minds towards Goodneſs and Holineſs. The Thoughts are apt to rove and range in a diſorderly Manner; but Meditation is that which cures them of this Malady, and hinders their extravagant Follies and Excurſions. When a Man is rightly buſied about this Work, he may ſay with the Pſalmiſt, who was more

frequent

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* *Φιλοθέωρον τὸ ζῶον. Arrian. in Epictet.*

* *Hagah.*

* *Max. Tyr. Diſſertat.* 1.

frequent in this religious Exerciſe than any Perſon we read of, *My Heart is fixed*, for 'tis This that poizes and fixes him in his Religion, and ſuffers him not to be heady and precipitant. If we have not this Attention of Mind, this Advertency, this Cogitancy, we ſhall be indifferent and cold in Religion: And our Religion will not be of long Duration unleſs we take it up upon deliberate Thoughts, and ſeriouſly ponder what we pretend to believe. Therefore this may convince us of the Excellency of this Duty, it being that which makes the Soul Manly and Stayd.

Again, it begets *Heavenly Mindedneſs.* For tho' by it we converſe with all Sorts of Objects, yea the meaneſt, (as I have ſhewed before) yet by theſe it ultimately conducts us to the Things that are above, and places our Minds ſteadfaſtly upon them. This is the true Teleſcope that diſcovers thoſe bright and heavenly Objects to us; and, tho' they are at a great Diſtance from us, brings them near to our Eye, and gives a full and perfect View of them.

It promotes *Prayer*, which is the very Key of all Devotion, and is the chiefeſt Office of our Religion. For by the pious Working of our Thoughts, we bring ourſelves into a Temper fit to appear before God. We prepare our Hearts for a ſubmiſſive Acknowledgement of our Miſcarriages, becauſe, by looking into our own Breaſts, and reflecting on our paſt Lives, we ſupply ourſelves with Matter for an humble and ſincere Confeſſion. We likewiſe put ourſelves into a right Poſture for Petition and Supplication, becauſe by converſing intimately with ourſelves, we come to underſtand our Wants and Neceſſities; and ſo we know what to aſk. Beſides, Meditation rouzes our Minds, and therefore makes us more capable of offering up our Adreſſes to the Almighty with an acceptable Vigour and Earneſtneſs. This adds Fire to this ſpiritual Sacrifice. This is true, whether we ſpeak of Oral Prayer, ſuch as is uttered with the Voice; or of Mental Prayer, which is conceived in the Heart only. The one will dwindle into *Cold Formality* if it be not warmed and enlivened by this; the other will verge towards *Enthuſiaſm* if it be not the Iſſue of this rational Operation of the Soul. Meditate therefore, and thereby rectify both thy Audible and Silent Devotion. Speak with Thyſelf before thou openly ſpeakeſt to God. Entertain Soliloquies in thy own Soul, before thou ſendeſt up thy Ejaculations to Heaven.

Further, Meditation helps all the Duties in Religion, and the Exertment of all the Graces of the Holy Spirit, by ſeaſoning the Heart with ſavoury and pious Thoughts: And then the ſanctified Mind makes every Thing conduce to Godlineſs and Holineſs. Eſpecially the Looking-back, and Contemplating our former Actions, is of great Uſe to us. *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies*, Pſal. cxix. 59. ſaith the Royal Penitent, *I pondered the paths of my feet*, (as he phraſes it in another Place) I conſidered well what I had done, and how I had behaved myſelf; I made a ſtrict Enquiry into my paſt Life, and then I began to chide myſelf for my Folly, and to bewail my Forgetfulneſs of God and Heaven: And thus I immediately abandoned my former Sins, and, as faſt I could, I betook my ſelf to a Religious and Holy Life, *I made haſte and delaied not to keep thy commandments.* Thus, this is an effectual Inſtrument to expedite and facilitate the Ways of Righteouſneſs to us. For 'tis Want of Reflection on our Lives, and a due Conſideration of our Actions, which makes us ſo backward to embrace a Godly Life. If we would therefore experience a happy Change in our Lives, we muſt follow the Example of this good Man; that is, we muſt ſtop ourſelves in our Career, breath a while, take Time to reflect on our Ways: And thus, by the divine Grace aſſiſting us, we ſhall ſee the Danger we are in, we ſhall be made ſenſible of our perilous Condition, and we ſhall be invited to lay hold on the Offers of Mercy in Chriſt Jeſus our Redeemer: And, upon *deliberate* Thoughts, we ſhall forſake our former Evil Ways, and make God our Choice and our Portion; and prefer him before all Things whatſoever. Thus we ſee how uſeful a Duty this is in the Life of a Chriſtian, yea, how indiſpenſably neceſſary it is in order to a religious Life, and the Attaining of Heaven and Happineſs.

In the laſt Place, it not only promotes Religion, but the *Comforts* and *Solaces* which attend it. And this may be the Meaning of the Pſalmiſt's Words, *In the multitude of my Thoughts within me, thy Comforts delight my Soul*, Pſal. xciv. 19. that is, in the frequent Uſe of Meditation, I find Abundance of Joy ſpringing up in my Soul: I am unſpeakably cheared and refreſhed by this Means. Thence we may obſerve, that this holy Man joyns *Meditation* and *Delight* together, *Pſal.* cxix. 14, 15, 16. and ſo in the 23*d* and 24*th* Verſes: And in *Pſal.* civ. 34. Even one of the Moraliſts could ſay, * Nothing is ſo ſerviceable towards the keeping up of Peace and Quiet in the Soul of a Man, as his Converſing much with himſelf, and very little with others. This Latter doth too often diſtract and ſoure Men; but the Former (if in a right Manner uſed) ſweetens and pacifies them, and lets in full Joys into their Minds. And indeed if Conſideration and Contemplation be (as One ſtiles them) * the Natural Food of Souls, then 'tis no Wonder that as much Pleaſure is taken in it as in our daily Nouriſhment and Repaſt. Yea, hereby the Mind of a religious Man is ſumptuouſly entertained, feaſted and regaled, beyond all that Outward and Senſual Pleaſures can afford: For (let the vain World talk what it will in Commendation of this) it is certain that the True † Solid Joy is that which is Retired, and is moſt within us. Thus we ſee the Worth and Excellency, the Uſefulneſs and Advantage of the Chriſtian *Meleteticks*, the divine Art of Meditating.

The Third General Head to be inſiſted on is the *Miſchief of Inconſideration*, or the Neglect of this excellent Duty of Meditation. Man, in his degenerate State, is a raſh inconſiderate Creature: He came into the World with his Head foremoſt, and ever afterward he runs *headlong*, 'till he is carried out of it in an other Poſture. And this is the Fault of *Chriſtian* Men, and that whereby they generally miſcarry: They will not reflect on their Ways, they will not be brought to it by any Means, as if it were as dangerous to *look back* as it was to *Lot*'s Wife. Whereas it is certain that their *great Danger* flows from This: Want of Advertency and Thinking expoſe them to all Miſery. Therefore the Complaint is, *My people doth not conſider*, Iſai. i. 3. which is repreſented in this Chapter, as the Source and Original of all the Sins they committed, and of all the Calamities which befel them. The Royal Preacher gives us this Character of *Fools*; that is, of Sinners, that *they conſider not that they do evil*, Eccl. v. 1. and thence 'tis that they perſiſt in their Follies and Vices, and continually offend God and violate his Holy Laws.

Men ſeldom ſin out of Ignorance; for they know their Duty, and are taught what they ought to do: But Want of Conſideration is the Great Spring of all their Diſorders. The Drunkard knows that he ought not to be immoderate in his Cups, he need not be told that Debauchery and Exceſs are great and heinous Crimes; but that which cauſes him to be extravagant is this generally, That he will not entertain any ſerious and deliberate Thoughts concerning this Matter. He is not cool enough to *Conſider*, and ſo he is given up to that ſcandalous Vice. The Common Swearer knows that God will *not hold* that Perſon *guiltleſs who taketh his Name in vain*; yet this his Knowledge is made of no Uſe by Inconſideration. The Liar hath certainly heard that *God will deſtroy them that ſpeak lies*, Pſal. v. 6. yet doth he not correct this Fault of his Tongue, for Want of ſerious *Attention*. The Unclean Perſon hath been told that *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge*, yet he continues in his Lewdneſs becauſe he gives himſelf no Time to ponder his Actions. And I might inſtance in other Sins and Enormities, as Covetouſneſs, Pride, Uncharitableneſs, and the like; and ſhew you that Men offend in theſe Kinds, not becauſe they knew not that they are really evil, and palpable Breaches of God's Laws, but becauſe they are not awakened into a Senſe of their reſpective Duties by due Conſideration. They nouriſh Incogitancy and Stupidity, and are not attentive to what they know. Perhaps they may pretend that becauſe their Lives are ſo wild and extravagant, therefore they dare not *Reflect* on them, and Search into them, and enter into ſerious Thoughts concerning them. But *This* ſhould rather puſh them foward to examine their Lives, and *becauſe*

* *Nihil æquè proderit ad quietem commodam retinendam quàm minimùm cum aliis loqui, plurimùm ſecum.* Sen. Epiſt. 110. ad Lucil.

* *Eſt animorum ingeniorumque naturale quoddam quaſi pabulum Conſideratio Contemplatióque.* Cic. 4. Academ.

† *Solidum gaudium plus introrſus patet.* Sen.

they are ſo bad and black, *therefore* to *think* ſeriouſly of amending and reforming them. They ought to have *This* often inculcated on them, that Heedleſneſs and Inconſideration are the direct Way to Ruin, and that they cannot be guilty of a greater Folly than This, *viz.* to paſs their Time without a deliberate Pondering of their Ways and Manners. Hence they may date their Bane and Deſtruction.

The *Fourth* and *Laſt* Thing I undertook was to offer *Directions for the right Managing of our Meditations.* And *Firſt*, by Way of Caution, you are to be adviſed not to give yourſelves up to *Immoderation* in this Exerciſe, but to uſe Prudence and Diſcretion. We are told that *Carneades* (an ancient Philoſopher) was ſo ſtudious and given to Thinking, that he often neglected to eat his Meat when he was ſet at Table: Inſomuch, that if his Servant had not uſed to remind him, he would have ſtarved himſelf. Of whom *Valerius Maximus* thus ſpeaks, * His Soul enjoyed Life, but as for his Body, it ſeemed to be none of his; and it was uſeleſs and ſuperfluous. There are ſome well-diſpoſed Perſons, who, tho' they do not come up to this Heighth and Extremity, yet are apt to incline to it; that is, exceſſively to indulge themſelves in Thinking and Ruminating, even to the impoveriſhing and exhauſting their Spirits, and diſabling them for neceſſary and lawful Buſineſs: Yea, they ſo over-act this Part, that at laſt they ſtupify their Minds: By over-working their Brains they even tire them out, and loſe all the Vigour of their Thoughts. Here therefore we ſhould act diſcreetly, and attend to the Advice of a pious and learned Writer, who was as well ſkilled in the Art of Meditating as any Man whoſoever, * [Suffer not your Mind to be either a Drudge or a Wanton: Ever exerciſe it, but overlay it not.]

Another *Caveat* may be this, that (according to *Gregory Nazianzen*'s Counſel)* when we meditate of divine Things, we remember to keep ourſelves within Bounds. Many are too inquiſitive and curious in their Contemplations, and pry too far into hidden Myſteries. They will *be wiſe above that which is written*, and audaciouſly perplex their Thoughts about Secrets that are not to be known. Let us not venture to tread in theſe Mens Steps, but manage our Thoughts with Choice, and employ them about thoſe Things which are the proper Objects of them, and will yield us ſome Fruit, and prove really advantagious to us. In brief, whilſt we muſe on divine Myſteries, let us not be too bold and daring, but ſet Limits to our Thoughts, becauſe we are ourſelves limited and finite Creatures. Thus far by way of Caution.

Now more directly and poſitively I am to ſhew how you ought to manage this Exerciſe with Profit, and that *Firſt* as to the *Place*, *Secondly* as to the *Time*. As to the Former, ſome fit Place is to be made Uſe of: And in general it muſt be ſaid, that ſome private one ought to be choſen. If you would meditate aright, you muſt retreat from the Noiſe and Buſtle of the World. For tho' (as hath been ſaid before) the Mind oftentimes makes Uſe of outward and worldly Objects, and thoſe very common and obvious, yet there is at that very Time a Drawing off the Mind from the World. Whilſt it converſes thus with external Objects, it ſeparates from them, in order to ſpiritualizing them: By a Noble Chymiſtry it extracts the fineſt Spirits out of the groſſeſt Bodies. But tho' there be this occaſional Converſe with the World, yet you muſt ſtep aſide ſometimes, you muſt get out of the Throng, and keep yourſelf Company, if I may ſo ſay. And when you are thus alone, you muſt be very buſy, and that to ſome very good Purpoſe. For Privacy and Solitude are not commendable unleſs well employed. There was an Emperour that uſed to be much retired, and was often alone; but he did nothing but kill Flies. There are too many that imitate him, whilſt they make their Retirement ſubſervient only to mean and trifling Things, and unworthy of their Thoughts. Therefore it is to be remembred, that upon the right or ill managing of *Privacy* there is very much depending. Whence it is a Proverb among the *Italians*, that a ſolitary Man is either a Brute or an Angel; that is, his Solitarineſs makes him either very bad or very good. The Way to make us this Latter, is to order our Thoughts in a due Manner when we are alone, and to make our Retirement an Inſtrument of Religion and Holineſs. Then it will deſerve the Encomium which one of the Ancients gives it, namely, that * It is a Help to the Soul to aſcend to Heaven, and is the Mother of Divine Contemplation, and (which is as high an Elogium as can be) doth, as it were, of a Man make a God.

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* *Anima tantummodo vitâ fruebatur, corpore verò quaſi alieno & ſupervacuo circumdatus erat.* Lib. 8. cap. 7.

* Biſhop *Hall.*

* Μελέτα μὲν ἐν τοῖς θείοις, ἀλλ' εἴσω τῶν ὅρων μένων. *Orat.* 26.

* Συνεργὸς ϗ μήτηρ τῆς θείας ἀναβάσεως ϗ θεοποιός. *Greg. Naz. Orat.* 2.

As for the *Particular Place* of Privacy, that muſt be left to your Choice. You may walk in a Garden or Orchard, and turn it into a Paradiſe by innocent Contemplation. The Primitive Worſhipers choſe a Grove for their Devotions: And if you have in the Summer-Time ſuch a Convenience not far off, it will ſerve as well for Shade as Privacy. Or, with the ancient Patriarch *Iſaac* you may breathe the free Air in the Fields, when you intend to meditate, *Gen.* xxiv. 63. Or, if you are delighted with a yet freſher Gale, for the fanning and agitating your Spirits, make Choice of ſome Place that hath a conſiderable Aſcent; as our Saviour himſelf, when he had a Mind to be apart and ſolitary, went up into a Mountain. St. *Jerom* would needs go viſit *Bethlehem* and live there, imagining he could think of Religion beſt in the Place where Chriſt was born. But this, and the like Fancy in others, was at laſt the Riſe of *Pilgrimage* among the ſuperſtitious Chriſtians, and therefore 'tis not to be imitated. You may at home perform the whole Work of Meditation, by ſhutting yourſelves up in your Cloſet, or by walking in a private Room. Your particular *Circumſtances* and *Conveniences* will dictate to you theſe Things better than I can.

The *Time* alſo is to be obſerved; which in the General is preſcribed in that Text of the Pſalmiſt, where 'tis ſaid of the godly Man, that *He meditates in the law of the Lord day and night.* Which Expreſſion may ſignify the Two Parts of the Natural Day, diſtinguiſhed into Day and Night. In the Day-Time many Things occur which adminiſter to our Thoughtfulneſs. And in the Night Seaſon, when we are retired and quiet, there is a fit Opportunity for Meditation: And accordingly we find the pious Pſalmiſt frequently making Uſe of this Seaſon. *I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches*, Pſal. lxiii. 6. *Mine eyes prevent the night-watches that I may meditate in thy law*, Pſal. cix. 148. And he found this ſo beneficial that he adviſeth others to the ſame Practice, *Commune with your own hearts on your beds, and be ſtill*, Pſal. iv. 5.

Or we may underſtand this Expreſſion of the Pſalmiſt in a larger Senſe, *Day and Night* is as much as *continually*, *conſtantly*. Thus *Joſhua* is commanded to *meditate in the book of the law day and night*, Joſ. i. 8. It is the ſame with *all the day*, Pſal. cxix. 97. where the Pſalmiſt profeſſes that the *Law is his meditation all the day*, that is, at all Times, Seaſons and Opportunities that are convenient. The *Aſſiduity* of this Work is that which is here commended to us. We muſt be very frequent in it, we muſt inure ourſelves to it. A Learned * Father of the Chriſtian Church fitly compares the Soul to a *Well*, from whence we muſt continually be *drawing* ſomething, or elſe the Water will not be pure and wholeſome. It is by Meditation that we draw Waters from this Well, and we muſt be often doing it, that we may preſerve our Minds pure and uncorrupt. And truly there are freſh Springs continually to ſupply us, there are inexhauſtible Funds of Meditation, ſo that *Day and Night* we may be exerciſed in this Employment.

* *Clem. Alexand. Strom.* 1.

But there are ſome *particular* and *peculiar Times* which are moſt ſuitable and proper for it. As *Firſt*, At the Cloſe of every Day; for which we have the Example of the Patriarch *Iſaac*: *He went out to meditate at the eventide*, Gen. xxiv. 63. He choſe this Time as moſt convenient for the exerciſing his Mind in Way of Devotion. We read that at the ſame Time, *viz. in the evening David walked on the roof of his palace*, 2 Sam. xi. 2. which it is likely he was wont to do in way of Contemplation, to ſhut up the Day; tho' now unhappily he was diverted from his uſual Employment, by a Spectacle which coſt him many a ſorrowful Meditation afterwards.

Beſides, Every *Lords Day* is a Time ſet apart for this Holy Exerciſe I am ſpeaking of. *Now* it is proper to meditate on the Works of the Creation, and the Almighty's finiſhing them, when he ceaſed to create any new Species of Creatures, and inſtituted the Sabbath-Day for the Commemoration of theſe Works, and that Reſt. Now it is alſo proper to meditate on the New Creation, the Redemption wrought by Jeſus Chriſt, the Truth and Efficacy of which were confirmed by his Reſurrection from the Dead; and therefore the Firſt Day of the Week, on which he roſe, was ſet apart by him and his Apoſtles to celebrate this Glorious Tranſaction, and to ſpend our Thoughts at that Time about a Subject of ſo great Importance to us. We read that St. *John was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day*, Rev. i. 10. that is, he was in Spiritual and Divine Contemplation: And then it was that ſuch great and wonderful Things were revealed to him. Tho' we cannot and ought not to expect ſuch Revelations, (that being an extraordinary Diſpenſation) yet we are invited by this Example to ſpend ſome Part of this Day in Holy Meditation.

And again, *after we have been reading or hearing God's Word*, whether on the Lord's Day, or at any other Times, this Duty is very ſeaſonable. After the Apoſtle had given ſeveral Inſtructions to *Timothy* concerning his miniſterial Office, he adds, *Meditate upon theſe things*, 1 Tim. iv. 15. So muſt we, when we have been inſtructed in religious Matters, recollect what we have heard or read, in order to fixing the divine Truths on our Minds. It is an uſual proverbial Speech in the *Talmud*, when the Reader is adviſed to lay aſide perverſe Opinions and Apprehenſions, and to embrace the true and genuine Senſe, *Go out and Think*, weigh well the Matter with thyſelf. Many a good Inſtruction is loſt for want of practiſing this. Many uſeful Books are read, but they prove ineffectual, becauſe the Contents of them are not ſufficiently thought of. Many practical Sermons are heard, but become uſeleſs beceauſe they are never revolved in Mens Minds, it being the common Fault of moſt Hearers to go from the Church into Company, and fall to talking of ordinary Affairs, and never to think of what they have heard.

In the next Place, at the *Celebration of the Lord's Supper*, nothing is or can be more ſeaſonable than Meditation. In this Sacred Ordinanee it is of the greateſt Uſe imaginable, becauſe (as was hinted before) here are material Objects ſet before our Eyes, yea, and expoſed to our other Senſes, on purpoſe to repreſent to us Spiritual and Heavenly Myſteries: Wherefore without a ſerious Application of our Minds, we ſhall reap no Benefit by this Ordinance: It will be quite loſt and made void without this mental Reflection.

Alſo in *Time of Trouble and Diſtreſs* this Duty is of ſingular Advantage, and therefore then eſpecially we muſt not forget to practiſe it, according to that of *Solomon*, *In the Day of adverſity conſider*, Eccl. vii. 14. Now in a more eminent Manner Conſideration is uſeful. Now eſpecially conſider what it is that provokes the Almighty to Anger: Know of yourſelves, by ſerious Reflection on your Ways, what particular Sins theſe are which call for Puniſhment from Heaven. King *David* was a Man of Affliction and Sorrow; and accordingly we find him a Man of Meditation. After he had complained of his Troubles we hear him uttering theſe Words, *Pſal.* cxliii. 5. *I remember the days of old, I meditate on all thy works, I muſe on the work of thy hands.* I conſider how Gracious and Merciful a God thou haſt been in all Ages to thy fathful Servants, and thou wilt not exclude me from the like Favour and Kindneſs. The Conſideration of this cheared his Spirits, and brought him to himſelf again. It is true he had applied himſelf to this Remedy in *Pſal.* lxxvii. 3, 5, 6. and found it at firſt ineffectual: But this did not make him deſiſt, but put him on a farther Application, *v.* 10, 11, 12. *I will*, ſaith he, again *remember and revolve the works of the Lord, and his wonders of old, yea, I will meditate of all his works*, and accordingly in the following Verſes he recounts the Mercies and Deliverances vouchſafed by God to his People, when they were reduced to the greateſt Streighrs and Difficulties. From ſuch Comfortable Reflections he takes Heart, and encourages himſelf in the Goodneſs of the Almighty. And in many other Pſalms, which were compoſed when he was in great Diſtreſs, he ſets himſelf to meditate on the former Acts of God's Providence, and to ſolace his Mind with looking back on the paſt Inſtances of Divine Favour ſhewed to himſelf. As Calamity puts a Man upon Reflection,

tion, ſo this Reflection is ſerviceable to comfort and chear him in his calamitous Circumſtances.

Laſtly, Not only the Times of *Affliction* but of *great Mercy and Deliverance* are proper for Meditation. This perhaps is the Meaning of the Cloſe of the 16*th* Verſe of the ix*th* Pſalm, where the Holy Man had been praiſing God for his ſignal Mercies, and exciting others to do the ſame, *Higgaion Selah*, ſaith he, as much as to ſay, *meditate and pauſe* on this gracious Diſpenſation of Heaven, for that is the Import of theſe *Hebrew* Words. It is a ſeaſonable Employment in a Time of Deliverance and Rejoycing to be very ſolemn in our Meditations. Then it behoves us to deſcant upon the particular Inſtances of the Goodneſs of God to us, and at the ſame Time to reflect on our own Unworthineſs.

Having thus ſhewed what are the moſt advantagious *Times* for the Exerciſe of this Duty, I will in the next Place adjoyn the following *Qualifications* of it. That it may be really uſeful and profitable, it muſt firſt be very ſerious and compoſed. I have not been ſpeaking all this while concerning the mercurial and airy Sallyings forth of the Fancy, I have not been treating of the wild Rollings of the Imagination: It is quite another Thing I have been diſcourſing of. Meditation is a very deliberate and ſedate Act of the Soul, and there is nothing in it that is light and ludicrous. When we meditate we ought to be very attentive, grave, and ſtaid. Eſpecially ſeeing the Things of God and of Religion are the Subject of our Thoughts, it concerns us to be in good Earneſt.

Again, Prayer muſt always accompany Meditation. I ſhewed before how this promotes Prayer: It is as certain that Prayer promotes this, and therefore we ſhould take Care that it be its conſtant Attendant. Thus we find it in *David*'s Pſalms very often: He makes expreſs Mention of both together, *Pſal.* v. 1, 2. *Conſider my meditation, hearken unto the voice of my cry, for unto thee will I pray.* And he not only joyns Prayer with Meditation in ſeveral other Places, but in *Pſal.* xix. 14. he makes Uſe of the Former to commend the Latter unto God, *Let the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy ſight, O Lord.* Hence it may be the ſame * *Hebrew* Word ſignifies *to meditate* and *to pray.* They both go together, and they mutually help one an other.

Further, Meditation muſt be accompanied with the *Affections*, or elſe it is a very dry and uſeleſs Exerciſe. Think not that you have meditated to any conſiderable Purpoſe 'till your Hearts are throughly affected with what you have been meditating of. Of this you have an Example in that pious King and Prophet whom I have ſo often cited: *Whilſt I was muſing*, ſaith he, *the fire burned*, Pſal. xxxix. 3. His Heart was inflamed by Meditation, he was throughly warmed with this religious Exerciſe. Such muſt our Muſings, our Contemplations be, they muſt fly from the Head to the Heart: We muſt feel as well as underſtand: We muſt *taſte* as well as *ſee*, that *God is good*, and that Religion and Holineſs are ſo in themſelves. Reſt not in bare Speculation, but remember this, that Meditation is that Exerciſe of the Mind whereby we come to have an affectionate Senſe of the Matters we converſe with.

I muſt ad this, that *Reſolution* ought to follow Meditation, which is another excellent Help to Godlineſs, and deſerves a *particular Diſcourſe* by itſelf; but becauſe it is ſo nearly allied to *Conſideration*, and is indeed the genuine and proper Fruit of it, I will annex it here to this Duty, and enlarge upon it.

As every Man ought to *conſider*, ſo he ſhould *reſolve*, for what will his Thoughtfulneſs profit him unleſs he fix upon ſomething? This then is that which I urge, That we are obliged to add *Reſolution* to our Conſideration and Meditation. It is an excellent Precept which *Arrianus* hath given us, * Firſt ſit down, and ſay what thou wilt be at, what thou intendeſt to take to; determine in thy Mind how thou wilt act. But we have greater and nobler Precepts and Examples in the Holy Book: [As for me and my Houſe, *we will* ſerve the Lord] ſaid *Joſhua*, *Joſ.* xxiv. 15. He reſolves both for himſelf and his Family. *David* likewiſe was a Man of firm and ſolemn Reſolution, [*I am purpoſed*, ſaith he, that my Mouth ſhall not tranſgreſs,] *Pſal.* xvii. 3. [*I ſaid* I will confeſs my Tranſgreſſions unto the Lord,] *Pſal.* xxxii. 5. [*I ſaid* I will take heed to my Way, that I ſin not *with my tongue*, Pſal. xxxix. 1. I ſaid, that is, according to the Import of that Word ſometimes in Scripture, I purpoſed, I reſolved.

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* *Snach.*

* Τίς εἶναι θέλεις, σαυτῷ πρῶτον εἰπέ, &c. Lib. 3. cap. 23.

This is called *engaging the heart to approach unto him*, Jer. xxx. 21. It is recorded of *Daniel* that *he purpoſed in his heart* that he would not defile himſelf with the Kings Meat or Drink, *Dan.* i. 8. And mark how reſolved thoſe captive *Jews* were, *Dan.* iii. 17, 18. Be it known unto thee, O King, that *we will not ſerve thy gods, nor worſhip the golden image which thou haſt ſet up.* This we are *reſolved on* that we will obey the King of Kings, and act according to his Laws, which muſt be kept, tho' with the Violation of all human Laws and Injunctions: No Hardſhips, no Tortures and Puniſhments, yea, no Kind of Death ſhall divert us from this. This pious *Reſolving* may be obſerved in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, *Luke* xv. 18. *I will ariſe and go to my father*, I have determined with myſelf that I will return Home; and accordingly we read in the 20*th* Verſe that *he aroſe and came to his father*, and happily changed his former Life for a better. It is the Strength of our Reſolutions that adds Quickneſs to our Endeavours. The Arrow which is drawn to the Head, flies the faſter and ſtronger. If you would make ſpeedy Diſpatch in Religion, firmly and cordially reſolve with yourſelves (notwithſtanding all Difficulties and Diſcouragements) to be Good and Holy, to bend all your Forces towards the Purſuit ~~of true~~ Godlineſs. With good Reaſon *Barnabas*, when he had obſerved the Grace of God among the Chriſtians of *Antioch*, exhorted them that *with purpoſe of heart they would cleave unto the Lord*, Acts xi. 23. for there is nothing that doth more promote a religious and godly Life.

But, on the contrary, *Irreſolutian* and *Unfixedneſs* betray you to all Diſorders and Miſcarriages. As I ſhewed you before that *Inconſideration*, ſo 'tis true that *Irreſolution* makes all the Commands of God ineffectual, and leads Men to the Commiſſion of all Sins. It is no Wonder that the Generality of Perſons are ſo backward and careleſs in Religion, when they never ſo much as intend in good Earneſt to mind their Salvation. Their Thoughts are looſe and remiſs and unconcerned: How is it poſſible then that they ſhould make any Progreſs in the Ways of Holineſs? That was a notable proverbial Remark which *Solomon* made, *Prov.* xvii. 24. *The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth*, that is, moſt Men (who are *Fools* in *Solomon*'s Stile) are unſettled and unfixed, they wander and rove with their Thoughts, they ſometimes make an Eſſay, they begin ſome good Enterprize, but preſently they are weary of it, and give it over. Fruits rot when they hang too long on the Trees. Mens Purpoſes dwindle and decay, die and periſh and come to nothing, becauſe they are not reduced to Act.

In the *Laſt* Place, then, Meditation muſt produce not only *Reſolution* but
* Suach. *Action.* And truly the * Original Word may ſuggeſt this to us, for 'tis a Word of *Action*, as well as of *Devotion.* Devout Thoughts miniſter to religious Endeavours and Enterprizes: And if our Meditation ends not in this, it is of no Value, it is all to no Purpoſe. Wherefore do not ſatisfy yourſelves with mere Contemplation; but proceed further, let it not only warm your Hearts, but have Influence on your Lives and Manners. By how much the more you are addicted to Thinking than other Men, by ſo much the more are you obliged to live better than others, and to act according to thoſe Impreſſions which are in your Minds by frequent Thinking and Reflecting.

Let me requeſt you then to manage this great and neceſſary Work of Meditation according to thoſe *Directions* which I have tendered to you. On this Piſgah take a Proſpect of *Canaan.* Look thro' bodily Objects to thoſe that are Spiritual. Let Heaven have your Minds and Hearts, whilſt this World hath your Bodies. Let your Thoughts be there, whilſt you live where you deſire to be when you die. In all your Affairs and Buſineſſes make Religion your greateſt Buſineſs. Be thoughtful concerning your future State, concerning the Events of Eternity. Often ask yourſelves whether you are in the right Way to a Bleſſed State. Demand of yourſelves to what Purpoſe you live in the World, what you are deſigned for, why you were made, and then ſee whether you have anſwered thoſe Ends in your Lives. Weigh your Actions, and examine whether they be according to the excellent Rules of the Goſpel, and according to the holy Pattern which Chriſt hath ſet before you.

Thus exerciſe yourſelves, thus think, thus meditate, and the rather becauſe this Employment of the Mind ſeems to be wholly laid aſide by moſt Men. This is an Age deſirous of Company and promiſcuous Converſation, which doth not much favour the Exerciſe of Thinking. Men dwell not at Home, they ſhun Themſelves, and grow out of their own Acquaintance and Knowledge. That of *Seneca* may be truly pronounced, * There is ſcarce a Man that would not rather be with any body than with himſelf. The Sinners of the Old World, and the Sodomites after them, were taken up either with their Pleaſures or their Buſineſs, as our Saviour repreſents their Caſe in *Luke* xvii. 26, *&c.* they could find no Time for Thinking and Conſidering. I wiſh this was not applicable to the Days we live in, wherein Men either by Work or Play, by Buſineſs or Recreation divert all ſerious Thoughts. They generally paſs without Intermiſſion from one Thing to another, and have no Leiſure to make Reflections on their Actions or on their State. Now, the more this Duty is neglected, the more ſhould we be concerned to practiſe it. We ſee what is the uſual Courſe of Men in the World: Wherefore let us be ſollicitous to be ſingular in this Point, and to ſpend ſome Portions of our Time in this obſolete and almoſt out-dated Exerciſe. Let us be the more frequent in it, becauſe it is ſo rare a Thing in theſe degenerate Times.

To excite you to this, remember this one Thing, That unleſs you betake yourſelves now to ſerious *Conſideration*, this, which at preſent would be a great Bleſſing to you, will be your great Plague and Torment hereafter. And that which you are ſo averſe from now, will then preſs itſelf upon you whether you will or no, and you will not be able to avoid it. If you neglect to conſider of your Ways in this Life, it will be your Puniſhment to conſider of them in the other. Then the Worm that never dies will gnaw and moleſt you, and it will be impoſſible to divert its Pains and Tortures. The greateſt Heat in Hell will be by Reflection. When you look back on what you have done, and weigh your Folly and Madneſs, you will feel no greater Anguiſh. But, alas! it will be too late to conſider then to any Purpoſe; therefore be perſuaded to practiſe this now, and let timely Reflection prevent that which is ſo direful in Eternity.

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* *Nemo eſt cui non ſatius ſit cum quolibet eſſe quam ſecum.* Epiſt. 25.

RELIGIOUS VOWS, A HELP to GODLINESS.

Psal. lxvi. 13, 14.

I will pay thee my vows which my lips have uttered.

IF *Conſideration* and *Reſolution* prove not effectual to the Promoting of Godlineſs, we muſt proceed further, and add unto them *Solemn Vows*, for Theſe are an Other *Good Help* to Religion, and are an exceeding great Furtherance of Piety and Holineſs. But when we have made theſe *Sacred Vows*, we muſt be ſure to look to the *Keeping* and *Performing* of them; otherwiſe it had been far better not to have made them. Theſe Two are the Subſtance of the Text, for here we find *David*, 1. *Uttering of Vows*. 2. Conſcientiouſly ſollicitous *to pay* them.

I begin with the *Firſt*, David*'s Uttering with his Lips* religious *Vows*. Where I obſerve that it is commendable and uſeful in Religion to make ſolemn Vows unto God. By theſe I mean no other than this, a Voluntary Obliging ourſelves, by Promiſe made unto God, to do ſome Good and Holy Thing for the future, as namely, to bid adieu to ſuch and ſuch Vices, to enterprize ſuch and ſuch vertuous Actions, to undertake and perform this or that pious Work. This is the General Account of a *Religious Vow*. And it is neceſſary that I ſuperadd This, that it is a ſolemn Promiſe made to God of ſuch Things as are *in our Power:* For we muſt not promiſe that which we are not able, by the Divine Aſſiſtance, to perform. Moreover, I muſt acquaint you that a *Vow* is a Degree above *Reſolution*; of which I ſpoke before: For a religious Vow is a more ſolemn Thing than a bare Purpoſe or Promiſe, becauſe there is a particular Invoking of God. I ſay, a *Vow* is more ſolemn and ſacred, there being a Calling of God to witneſs, and a more deliberate ſetting ourſelves in the Preſence of God, and appealing to Him. And for *this Reaſon* this religious Vowing is ſometimes called an *Oath*, or a *Swearing* to *God*, as you ſhall hear afterwards. Thus there is a great and ſtrong Obligation added by *This*, and we hereby bind ourſelves *more ſolemnly* and religiouſly to the Performance of our Duty.

Now, this Vowing and Swearing are not only *Lawful* but *Uſeful* among *Chriſtians*, and very ſerviceable for the Advancing of Religion and Holineſs. For although *Legal and Ceremonial Vows* (ſuch as are mentioned in the Laſt Chapter of *Leviticus*, and in other Places) are aboliſhed under the Goſpel; and though the *Vows among the Papiſts*, as of Pilgrimages, refraining from Marriage, a Monaſtick Life, Poverty and Beggary, *&c.* are vain and ſuperſtitious, and therefore not uſeful and practicable; yet there is a *Solemn Vowing* which is requiſite even in the Times of the *Goſpel.* For now we may make Vows of New Obedience unto God; we may ſolemnly promiſe before him that we will diſcharge our Duty more frequently and more affectionately for the future; we may, and *we ought* (if *bare Reſolutions* will not take Effect) vow in the Preſence of God that we will abandon ſuch and ſuch Sins. As for Example, That we will never drink to Exceſs, (though the Company we are in perſuade us with all Earneſtneſs and Importunity imaginable) that we will quit the Society of prophane Scoffers at Religion as ſoon as we diſcover them to be ſuch; that we will carefully abſtain from all Vain, Raſh, and Prophane Swearing. Theſe, and ſuch like ſolemn Promiſes before God are to be made by thoſe who know themſelves guilty of theſe Sins, and have found no Reſtraint and Curb from thoſe former *Purpoſes and Reſolves* which they have made. Know then that you are concerned in this Great Work of Religion, *viz.* to make ſerious Vows before God to oblige you to the Practice of your Duty. And that ſuch a ſacred Intercourſe between God and our own Souls is lawful, and in ſome Caſes neceſſary, and every way ſerviceable to the Ends of Godlineſs and a religious Life I will endeavour to convince you by theſe few Arguments.

1. It is undoubtedly a Part of the Worſhip of God, and is incorporated into Religion. For if an *Oath* be as great an Acknowledging of God's Omniſcience and Omnipreſence as it is a Confirmation of the Thing which occaſioned it, (as certain it is;) then a *Vow* likewiſe is a ſolemn Acknowledgement of thoſe Divine Attributes, there being a Calling God to witneſs in *This* Act of Religion. And truly it ſufficiently appears from the many and repeated *Injunctions* in Holy Scripture, that Making of Vows is a Part of *God's Service*; for it would not have been *enjoyned* ſo frequently unleſs it had been a conſiderable Act of Holy Religion and Worſhip. And hence it is that *Vowing* and *Worſhiping* are joyned together by the Royal Pſalmiſt. And to our Purpoſe very much I conceive thoſe Words to be in *Pſal.* lxv. 1, 2. [*Praiſe waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee ſhall the vows be performed. O thou that heareſt prayers, unto thee ſhall all fleſh come.*] Obſerve here that *Vowing* is inſerted among the Duties of natural Religion, *viz.* Prayer and Thankſgiving; as much as to intimate to us that it is a plain Dictate of natural Religion, and that Men have *This* ingraven upon their Hearts, and that the rectified Reaſon of Mankind ſuggeſts This to them. Accordingly you read in *Jonas* i. 16. [*The men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a ſacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows*]. Here is a *Sacrifice*, and here is a *Vow*, both equally expreſſive of their *Religion:* And the Law of Nature dictated both. But though *Sacrifices* are ceaſed (as it's reaſonable they ſhould after the Offering of Chriſt on the Croſs, of which all the foregoing Sacrifices were but Types and Shadows;) yet *Vows* ſtill remain, and continue to be a Part of Religion, becauſe they have nothing in them that is Typical, but they may now, under the Evangelical Diſpenſation, be very ſerviceable and conducing to a Godly Life, and a ſtrict Converſation. And though *Bellarmine* and ſome others of the *Roman* Communion hold that Things commanded are not Matter of Vows, yet * other *Romaniſts* declare themſelves to be of a contrary Mind, and aſſert with good Reaſon that theſe Things which are commanded us are yet Matter of Vowing. For a Man may do the ſame Thing both by

* *Cornel. à Lapide, Cajetan, A Caſtro, Valentia.*

Virtue of a Religious Vow, and by Virtue of the Divine Command. Vows do *excite* us to perform that Duty which is enjoyned us, and they do *increaſe* our Obligation to the Duty.

2. Making of ſolemn Vows is a good Expedient againſt our frail and fickle Temper, againſt the Inconſtancy of our Minds and Perſuaſions. It is the beſt Way that can be thought of to keep us ſtedfaſt, and (which is the Crown of Religion) to make us perſevere in well doing. We are of ourſelves of mutable Natures, we are unconſtant and uncertain, and very apt to ſhrink from our Duty, and thefore it is fitting that we ſhould uſe ſome Method to *fix and eſtabliſh* us, and accordingly a *Vow* is a Reſtraint upon us, an Obligation *ſuperadded* to what we had upon us before. *Religio a religando*, ſaith *Lactantius:* Here it proves true, for this Piece of Religion *ties* and *binds* us to the Doing of our Duty. We being naturally enclined to revolt from our Maker, to divide ourſelves from God, to relinquiſh our Duty, and to abandon the juſt Commands of Heaven, 'tis requiſite we ſhould make Uſe of a Remedy againſt this, namely, by making ſolemn Promiſes and Vows, and thereby ſettling and confirming ourſelves in the Ways of Religion. Therefore it was well ſaid by *Maimonides*, * *Vows are the Hedge of Separation*, i. e. Vows duly and ſolemnly made are very inſtrumental to divorce and ſeparate us from our Sins, and to unite and wed us unto God and Virtue. Let me add

* *Vota ſunt ſepes ſeparationis.* More Nevoch.

3*dly*. That the Lives of Holy and Godly Perſons have not been deſtitute of *This* Part of Religion. You have the *Examples* of the greateſt and moſt eminent Worthies to vouch it. There are divers *Religious Votaries* mentioned in the Sacred Bible, with the *Occaſions* of their ſeveral Vows. As

1. They have betaken themſelves to this ſolemn Exerciſe of Religion, when they have been in Streights and Difficulties, and great Diſtreſſes. This appears from the Pſalmiſt's Words in my Text, Theſe *Vows* he tells you *his lips had uttered, and his mouth had ſpoken when he was in trouble.* So the ſame devout Perſon, *Pſal.* xxxii. 1, 2. *Lord, remember David and his troubles, how he ſware unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob.* That was a *fit Seaſon* to make Vows in. The Time of *Adverſity* calls upon us to *Conſider*, (as the wiſe Man ſpeaks,) and after that to *Reſolve and Purpoſe*, (as I have ſhewed you before). But if *Theſe* do not prove efficacious, then the Day of *Trouble* and *Adverſity* invites us more eſpecially to *Promiſe and Vow* in the Preſence of God, that we will keep and obſerve our former Obligations, and that *now* whilſt the Hand of God is upon us we will look narrowly into our Hearts and examine our Lives, aud eſpie our Miſcarriages, and learn from God's puniſhing and afflicting us to tie ourſelves more ſtrictly for the future to the Obſervance of his Laws.

2. The Religion of a Vow hath been obſerved by holy Perſons when ſome great Favour or Mercy was to be obtained of God. Thus *Jacob Gen.* xxviii. 20. ſacredly promiſed that *If God would be with him, and keep him in his way that he went, and would give him bread to eat, and rayment to put on, ſo that he came to his father's houſe in peace, then the Lord ſhould be his God.* And preſently he thinks of dedicating a Place to God, and giving Tithes to him. So *Hannah* when ſhe begged a Child of God, made a Religious Vow *to give him unto the Lord all the days of his life*, 1 Sam. i. 11. Again

3*dly*, A Vow hath been uſeful, and reckoned ſo by good Men for the ratifying and confirming of mutual Loves and Affections. Thus *David* and *Jonathan* were a Pair of kind *Votaries*, and what they did in that Manner was to fortify their Friendſhip to each other. And thus the ſolemn Vows and ſacred Engagements of Marriage are conducing and ſubſervient to a reciprocal Love and Kindneſs, and oblige thoſe who are engaged in that Vow to live ſuitably to ſo publick and profeſſed a Promiſe.

4*thly* and *Laſtly*, (And which is the chief and main Thing of all,) Holy Perſons have then made Uſe of Vows when they have found themſelves beſet with Sin and Vice, and almoſt conquered with the Power and Strength of them. They have made Uſe of this Holy Expedient to ſhake off the Dominion of their Luſts, and to enable them to do ſomething worthy of their Religion and the Profeſſion of it. *David* is an Example of this in *Pſal.* ci. which all of it is but one ſolemn Vow of Godlineſs and Zeal for Religion.

So in *Pſal.* cxix. 106. [I have *ſworn*, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous Judgements]. And *Job* was an *other* holy Votary, [Chap. xxxi. 1. *I made a covenant with my eyes*] *i. e.* I am under a *ſolemn Engagement and Vow* that I will not purſue Vanity and Folly, that I will lay a Reſtraint on my Senſes, and that I will not give Way to any Luſt and Lewdneſs. This was the Practice of the Chriſtians of old, as *Pliny* in one of his * Epiſtles tells us, they tied themſelves by Oaths, ſaith he, not to ſteal, not to commit Adultery, not to falſify their Words. Thus you ſee what was the Behaviour of holy Men, and on what *Grounds* and *Reaſons* they uſed to make religious Vows to God.

* Lib. 10. Epiſt. 97.

You ſee then what is your Duty, and what is your Concern: The Religion of Vows and ſolemn Engagements to God is to be obſerved by you when you find yourſelves backward to obey his Laws, and when you are really perſuaded that they will be ſerviceable to a ſtrict and holy Life. Eſpecially you muſt remember to vow the Performance of thoſe indiſpenſable Actions and Duties which you find yourſelves *moſt averſe* to. That Patient that hath a Limb to be cut off, and would have it done effectually, muſt ſuffer himſelf to be bound. I call a Religious Vow a Bond upon a Man: If he would (in our Saviour's Senſe) have a *Right Hand cut off*, i. e. if he would have any beloved Luſt to be ſubdued, if he would have his corrupt Nature cured, and his Life amended, he muſt ſubmit to be Bound, or rather he muſt voluntarily oblige himſelf by ſtrict Vows and Promiſes that he will ſurrender himſelf up wholly to the Will of God, and reſign his Will to that. *Sacramentum* is the old Word among the *Latins* for an *Oath* or *Vow.* This is certain that the *Evangelical Sacraments* are moſt *Sacred Vows to God.* We all of us made a ſolemn Vow in *Baptiſm*; and although we did it then *by Others*, yet now we muſt take it upon *Ourſelves*, and think ourſelves concerned in it as our own proper Vow. And at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper it is our Duty to *Renew* this Vow; and beſides, the Receiving of that Sacrament is a ſolemn Vow itſelf, and diſtinct from the Former. Thus we have vowed, and we muſt ſtill continue to do ſo, that is, at all Times when we ſee Occaſion, we ought to vow and promiſe new Obedience, and to oblige ourſelves by freſh Engagements to the Keeping of God's Law. This is very commendable in the Life of a Chriſtian, and is a great Antidote and Preventive againſt Sin, and a huge Advancer of Holineſs and a Blameleſs Life. The *True Reaſon* of a Vow is this, (as I have before ſhewed,) to render the Performance of our Duty more effectual, to be a Furtherance of Religion and real Godlineſs. And if your Vows do not contribute to this, they are unlawful, and cannot be ſaid to be Religious. Be ſure then that you make them tend to this, that they promote a Holy Life, and then they cannot miſcarry. Make Uſe of them to this Purpoſe only, and then you will experience the good Effects of them. If you find in yourſelves an Averſeneſs to your Duty, bind yourſelves to it by ſolemn Vows. Make ſerious Promiſes before God that you will not forget and ſlight his Laws, as you have formerly done, but that for the future you will be very obſervant of them, and make Conſcience of walking in the Ways of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, and let the World ſee that you *perform* the Vows you made.

Which brings me to the Second Part of the Text, namely, *David's Paying thoſe Vows* which his Lips had uttered. I have ſufficiently proved the *Debt*, that Vows are owing to God; I muſt now call upon you for *Payment.* As Vows are to be *made*, ſo they are no leſs religiouſly to be *performed.* I doubt not but ſome of you have ſolemnly vowed and promiſed that if God would ſpare you from going down to the Pit, when you laboured under ſuch Sickneſs as threatened Death; if he would relieve your Neceſſities, when you were in great Streights and Dangers; if he would diſpel your Fears as to this or that Calamity which you were under; then you would for the Time to come forſake your former Sins, and devote yourſelves to the Service of God more entirely than ever. Did not ſome Drunkard ſolemnly promiſe in his Diſtreſs that he would no more abuſe himſelf by Intemperance and Exceſs? Did not ſome unclean Perſon vow in the Extremity of Danger that he would not pollute either his Mind or Body by laſcivious Thoughts or Actions? Did not ſome prophane Swearer in a Day of Trouble turn his *prophane Oaths* into

Sacred ones, and ſolemnly vow and ſwear to the Lord that he would never afterwards be inveigled to ſo vain and fruitleſs a Sin? Was there not ſome Extortioner or Oppreſſor who ſacredly promiſed to make Reſtitution, and never more to grind the Faces of the Poor? Was there no Liar nor Cheater that engaged to practiſe for the future Faithfulneſs and Truth, Juſtice and Honeſty? Was there no Hypocrite that made a Shew of Sanctity and pretended Zeal in Religion, and yet at the ſame Time had no real Regard for Holineſs and Religion; was there not ſuch a one (I ſay) that vowed Integrity and Uprightneſs in the following Part of his Life, and promiſed to do all Things in Religion with a free, open and diſintereſted Soul? In ſhort, Was there never a drowzy Magiſtrate, a negligent Miniſter, a careleſs Maſter or Parent who fell into ſuch Promiſes and Vows as *Theſe*, That they would never neglect their Offices and Callings as they had before done, that they would puniſh Vice, and countenance Holineſs, and by their *own Examples* teach thoſe who were committed to their Charge to be truly godly and religious?

Thus, I ſuppoſe, there have been *Vows and ſolemn Promiſes* made. And, I might remind you likewiſe of thoſe ſolemn Vows which I mentioned *before*, *viz.* the *Covenant of Grace* firſt entered into at the Sacrament of *Baptiſm*, and afterwards renewed in the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Chriſt: At both which Times you ſolemnly conſecrated yourſelves to God and Religion. Oh, my Brethren, it is ſad to recount that *Theſe Vows* are *forgotten by the* Generality of Men and Women: They never think of thoſe ſacred Ties and Engagements, which are upon them. I beſeech you this Day call your Sins to Remembrance; heartily lament your Breach of Vows. I hope I have by mentioning theſe particular Inſtances beforenamed put you in mind of your former Miſcarriages: I exhort you to reflect upon them with the greateſt Sorrow and Remorſe, and now for the future be careful to *perform* your Vows. Reduce all your Promiſes into Practice. Let your ſacred Enagements paſs into Act and Execution. Think not that it is enough to conceive Vows, without taking Care to make them good. Obſerve that thoſe two are joyned together, [*Vow and pay unto the Lord your God*] Pſal. lxxvi. 11. And in *Pſal.* l. 40. [*Pay thy vows unto the moſt high*] And here in my Text, [*I will pay thee my vows which my lips have uttered*]; I will practiſe and perform thoſe holy Vows which I have at any Time offered unto thee, O Lord. Let this be *your Pattern*: Your Lips have uttered (it may be) many ſacred Vows: In that you have done well: But now it remains that you look after the *Performance* of thoſe Vows, otherwiſe you do very ill. The wiſe Man's Words are peremptory, *Eccl.* iv. 4, 5. [*When thou voweſt a vow unto God, defer not to pay it: for he hath no pleaſure in fools. Pay that which thou haſt vowed. Better it is that thou ſhouldſt not vow, than that thou ſhouldſt vow and not pay*]. Therefore do not think to play the Fool ſo egregiouſly with the God of Heaven. Such Folly and Fondneſs you will repent of one Day. The Theology of the *Heathens* tutored them in this, that God was not to be mocked; they were taught how ſinful and baſe a Thing it is to break their Vows, as I could ſhew you if I had Time. Let *Chriſtians* then be put to the Bluſh, and let them underſtand their Duty aright as to this Matter, and reſolve to practiſe it.

When we ſtand in Need of God's Mercies, when we are in great Trouble and Diſtreſs, then How religious are we, or rather what goodly Shews and Semblances of Religion do we make? We are ready to ſay as *Shechem* to *Dinah*'s Brethren, [*What ye ſhall ſay unto me I will give: ask me never ſo much, and it ſhall be given unto you*]. When we are beſet with Dangers and Calamities, we are very profuſe of our Promiſes and Engagements. O then *Thouſands of Rams, and Ten Thouſand Rivers of Oyl* we are willing to offer unto God. But when we are delivered we then take Time to conſider on it. Indeed we promiſe ſo largely that we think ourſelves under an Impoſſibility of performing our Promiſes. The Piece which was ſo overcharged now recoils. The Man that was ſo prodigal, turns Niggard. The great Banker breaks, and proves inſolvent. I read in *Gen.* xviii. 4, 5. that *Abraham*, who had invited the Angel to ſtay with him, promiſed him *a little Water and a Morſel of Bread*, but he prepared Cakes of fine Meal, and fetched a Calf tender and good, and he took Butter and Milk, and the Calf which he had dreſſed, and ſet it before him. Alas! we deal far otherwiſe with the God of Heaven, the Father of Spirits and Angels. We promiſe much, but when we come to Action, there is little done. I may truly ſay that we treat the God of Heaven as the Prieſts entertained *Bell* (as we read in the *Apocryphal* Writings) they ſet Meat before him, but eat up all themſelves. We baffle and devour all our pretended Engagements: We vow to *God*, and yet ſerve our own *Luſts*. We indeed make fair Promiſes to the Almighty, but we never think of keeping them. We return to our former Way of Sinning, and forget what we obliged ourſelves to. Our Hearts are deceitful, and not to be truſted, eſpecially in this very Particular which I am now ſpeaking of, namely, the Paying of our Vows. We ſin, and offend even then when we ſhould expiate our Faults. We vow againſt our own Sins, and our very Vows are faulty and ſinful, for we vow greater Things than we intend to act. How liberal, yea prodigal are we in our Engagements, but how penurious in our Performances? Yea oftentimes, the *more* free we are in the Former, the *more* backward do we ſhew ourſelves in the Latter; as we ſee ſometimes the Circles made in the Water enlarge themſelves ſo far that they loſe themſelves at laſt in their own Breadth, and grow great and wide to come to nothing.

The *Jews*, when they received the Law in that afrighting Manner which is deſcribed to us by *Moſes*, namely, with dreadful Thunder and Flaſhes of Lightning, with prodigious Interchanges of Darkneſs and Fire: When they perceived all this ſtrange and horrid Scene, they deſired it might be removed, fearing theſe odd Apparitions might end in their Deſtruction, and mark what a ſolemn Promiſe they made, *Whatſoever the Lord God ſhall ſpeak unto us by the mouth of Moſes, we will hear it and do it*, Deut. v. 27. Now they engage to be very obedient and dutiful; they will in all Things follow the Directions of their Guide whom God had ſet over them: And in obeying him they will obey God. And God heard theſe Promiſes, as well as obſerved their Afrightments and Perplexities. But how did this People behave themſelves afterwards? 'Tis true they had a *Mouth* to ſay all this, and much more, 'tis likely. But ſaith God, *v.* 29. [*Oh that there were ſuch a heart in them that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments and Ways*]; Oh that they would not only *ſpeak* but *do!* Oh that they would ſtand to their Word, and act according to what they have promiſed! But we find this People preſently after worſhipping the golden Calf, and running into the moſt abominable Diſorders. And ſo *afterwards* we read that their *godly Pretences and Promiſes* came to nothing.

Is not this our Caſe? We in Diſtreſs and Danger vow great Things, but we never think to do according to our Vows. Our Promiſes which were exceeding large, ſhrink and ſhrivel into ſuch mean and lank Performances, that, were not our Foreheads hugely hardened, we ſhould bluſh and be confounded when we conſider of it. We do with our Vows juſt as Men in reckoning do with their Counters, they make them ſtand ſometimes for Hundreds and Thouſands, and anon alter the Caſe, and make them ſtand only for Pence or Farthings. We interpret our Vows according to our own Pleaſure, and we make them ſignify what we will; yea, when we have a mind to it we make them ſtand for mere Cyphers. This is our general Behaviour; I beſeech you that you would be ſenſible of it, and heartily lament it. Think of that which was ſo often inculcated on the *Jewiſh* People, *viz.* That they would remember how they had been in the Houſe of Bondage, how they had ſuffered, and how they had been delivered from their Sufferings, and that when they came into *Canaan* they would not forget the *Promiſes* which they had made of Obedience, *Deut.* viii. 2, 3,----11. You are concerned to call to Mind the former Engagements which you have made. And think you hear God ſpeaking to you as *Moſes* did to the *Iſraelites*, *Deut.* xxxii. 6. *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O ye fooliſh people and unwiſe?* Have you no better Senſe of the Obligations you lie under than to provoke God by your utter forgetting them, and by committing thoſe Sins which you have ſo ſolemnly vowed againſt? At length be convinced of your vile Ingratitude, and repent of it: And betake yourſelves in good earneſt to the Performance of thoſe Things which have been the Matter of your religious Vows.

And in the Diſcharging of theſe your Promiſes, and Paying your Vows, obſerve theſe three plain Rules.

1. Do it *Willingly* and *Chearfully*. We are taught by Reaſon and Philoſophy that no Act is moral, and conſequently cannot have the Tincture of Virtue, unleſs it be free and voluntary. The *Chriſtian* Inſtitution alſo hath no Regard to *forced* Performances, to Actions that proceed from Violence and Compulſion. Theſe cannot be genuine, and then they cannot be acceptable. But although your *Vows* were in *ſome Manner forced*, (the Day of *Trouble* extorting them from you) yet ſee that you *perform* them moſt *willingly*, for the Lord loveth a chearful Votary.

2dly, See that you *ſpeedily* perform your Vows and Promiſes. And truly if you do it *chearfully*, you cannot but do it *ſpeedily*. The Direction given for performing of Vows under the Law muſt be applied to our evangelical Vows, *Deut.* xxiii. 21. *When thou ſhalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou ſhalt not be ſlack to pay it.* To which Purpoſe alſo is that Advice of *Solomon*, [Eccl. v. 4. *Defer not to pay thy vows*]. I might obſerve to you the great *Backwardneſs* even of God's Servants in paying their Vows, and performing their Covenants they made in the Time of their Diſtreſs: When Evils oppreſs them and environ them round, then they will build Altars, go to *Bethel*, be religious and devout; God ſhall have any Thing, and all Things of them. But alas when Mercy is conferred upon them, when God hath delivered and reſcued them from their Dangers, then they grow remiſs and negligent, they forget God and their Duty, though it was tied upon them by many a ſolemn Promiſe and Obteſtation.

You may take Notice from *Gen.* xxxv. 1. that God *rouzed Jacob* before he got up, and went to *Bethel* according to his Promiſe. [*Ariſe, go up*] ſaith God to him, as if *Jacob* had been *aſleep* all this Time, and was altogether unconcerned in the Performance of his Vow. How lazy and liſtleſs was this good Man? How loth was he to act according to his Engagement? And yet many Things might have put *Jacob* in mind of his Promiſe, and haſtened him to the executing of it, although God had not thus ſignally called unto him. The Tenour of *Jacob*'s Vow ran thus, That if God would vouchſafe to deliver him from his Brother *Eſau*, and go along with him and bleſs him, then the Lord ſhould be his God, and he would publickly own the Mercy by ſome ſignal Act at *Bethel*. Now God delivered *Jacob* from his Fears and Dangers, and his Brother who came in a hoſtile Manner againſt him fell on his Neck and kiſſed him. Again, *Jacob*'s Abode was at *Shechem*, which was near to *Bethel*, it being the very next Town to it, and ſo could not eaſily be forgotten. Beſides, his preſent Diſtreſs, by Reaſon of the wicked Demeanour of his Sons *Simeon* and *Levi* might have awakened him. But notwithſtanding theſe Things, God muſt call to *Jacob*, elſe he will not be mindful of his Vows. This is the Effect of our depraved Nature: We ſtop our Ears, and unleſs the Lord with a more eſpecial Voice ſpeak unto us, we remain neglectful of the Obligations that we are under. But let us hereafter be no more guilty in this Kind. Let us without any further Delay diſcharge ourſelves of our Vows and Promiſes. Let us be *ſpeedy* in our Performances.

3dly, Pay your Vows *fully* and *compleatly*. Remember that Heaven will not be ſerved by Halves, God will not accept of lame and imperfect Sacrifices. If thou haſt at any Time made Vows and Promiſes, ſee thou fulfilleſt them to the utmoſt. *Eraſmus* tells us of a Paſſenger at Sea, who being in no ſmall Danger by the Fury of a great Tempeſt, and now expecting every Minute to be a Sacrifice to the incenſed Ocean, after the Faſhion of that Religion which he had adopted, he ſolemnly vowed to the Virgin *Mary*, That if ſhe would be pleaſed to reſcue him from his preſent Danger, and make the Sea Calm, and ſet him ſafe on Shore, he would offer to her, and burn out at her Altar a great Taper as thick as the Maſt of the Ship wherein he was then in Danger. But when this Man was got ſafe to Shore, and had eſcaped all Danger, he was neglectful of his Promiſe, and inſtead of a great maſſy Taper he put her off with a Farthing Candle, and thought that That would ſerve her Turn. This in ſome Meaſure repreſents to us *our* Dealings with the God of Heaven. We promiſe *Great* Things, but perform very *Little* ones. We *profuſely* make

Vows, but very *niggardly* keep them. But (my Brethren) this ought not to be ſo. You muſt be careful above all Things to call to Mind the paſt Circumſtances you were in, and to reflect on your Behaviour at that Time; you muſt remember the Promiſes and Engagements which you then made, and the Mercies which you have ſince received; and you muſt *offer unto God Thankſgiving, and pay your Vows unto the moſt High*, as he hath expreſly commanded.

Pay your Vows to the *moſt High*, *Firſt*, To the *moſt high God*, who being Infinite, Immenſe and Omniſcient, *took Notice* of you when you offered up your Vows to him. He obſerved your Behaviour at that Time, he is acquainted with all your Promiſes and Engagements; therefore think not to deceive the *All-ſeeing God*. *Secondly*, Pay your Vows to the *moſt High*, who is able and willing to *reward* you, if you be obſervant of your Vows. Diſcharge *your Duty* to him by performing your ſolemn Obligations, and *he* will certainly do *his Part*, *i. e.* favourably accept of your Performances, and bleſs and proſper all your Affairs. *Thirdly*, Pay your Vows to him who is the *moſt High*, and therefore can and will *revenge* the Breach of your Vows and ſacred Promiſes. You may learn how *dangerous* it is not to perform our Vows from the xxxiv*th* and xxxv*th* Chapters of *Geneſis*. *Jacob*'s Daughter was raviſhed; and the *Shechemites* were murdered by his Sons, and ſtrange Outrages happened on both Sides: And all this was a Puniſhment for his *Forgetfulneſs of his Vows* which he had made. *Jacob* took up at *Sichem*, and thought of dwelling *there*: *Bethel* was quite forgot, *Bethel*, the Place where he ſo ſolemnly vowed to God. I, but he ſhall have Cauſe to remember it, and to mind the Hand of God ſtretched out againſt him, and againſt his. His Daughter's Chaſtity is violated, and they are all afraid of being aſſaſſin'd by the wicked Inhabitants and Neighbours, and his Sons are permitted to act the greateſt Villanies imaginable, and all this for his not going to *Bethel*. He had not paid his Vows: No Wonder that vicious Men were in a curſed *Vow and League* againſt him, and conſpired to ruin him and his Family. You ſee that God is a ſevere Exacter of Vows. *Jacob* vowed unto the Lord, and 'till he performed his Vows there was no Bleſſing upon him or his.

You that have made Vows unto God, conſider this, and look to the Executing and Diſcharging of them. It is a Sin of a high Nature (and ever was reckoned ſo) to break Vows and Promiſes made to *Men*, but the Fault muſt needs receive great Aggravations when the Covenant is between *God* and our own Souls. This highly provoketh the Wrath *of the Almighty*; and therefore he will not ſuffer the Breach of theſe Covenants to go unpuniſhed. God will not be mocked: And 'tis certain there cannot be a greater *Mockery* of Heaven than to make ſolemn Vows, and yet wholly to neglect the Practice and Performance of them. This is as much as to ſay, That God will be *put off* with fair Words and goodly Promiſes, and that 'tis not requiſite our *Actions and Lives* ſhould anſwer to our *Words* and Profeſſion. This Blaſphemy and Impiety muſt needs incenſe the divine Majeſty, and cauſe him to puniſh it in the ſevereſt Manner. Wherefore I beſeech you that you would *conſider* this weighty and important Doctrine. As you ſtand in Awe of God, and are afraid of his Judgements, deal faithfully with your own Souls. Run not into inevitable Danger; expoſe not yourſelves to the moſt grievous Penalties and Plagues by your wilful Neglecting to keep your Vows which you have made to God. Though you have *deferred* to pay this Debt, yet I hope it is not *too late* to do it now. It is true, in the uſual Procedures of Law if a Man make a Compact or Promiſe, and break his Day, he is at the Mercy of the Perſon to whom the Promiſe was made: But though God doth not uſually take the Forfeiture of our Delay, yet let me tell you, if we will, notwithſtanding his Clemency and Favour to us, *ſtill* defer to pay our Vows, what can we expect but that this great Creditor will ſue the Bonds we made, and be very ſevere with us for the Neglect of our Obligations, and force us to pay the utmoſt Farthing?

Be reminded then this Day of your indiſpenſable Duty, and let the Remainder of your Lives declare to the World that you are conſcientious Votaries; that is, as you made Vows unto God, ſo you are ſtudious to perform them. If the *Rechabites* kept their *Civil Vow*, (for it was no other, I ſuppoſe;) if they out of mere Obedience to their Father, having vowed to dwell in

Tents

Tents, and drink no Wine, moſt ſtrictly obſerved that Vow, (as 'tis certain they did;) if they in Things merely indifferent were ſo obſervant and punctual, how much more ought we to be ſo in the Keeping of our *Religious Vows*, whereby we tie ourſelves to the indiſpenſable Works of Holineſs, and the neceſſary Performance of that Duty which God requires of us? Imagine then that you heard the great God, the God of your Mercies ſpeak to you as he did to *Jacob*, Ariſe, go up to *Bethel*, and build an Altar there; *i. e.* be mindful to *perform your Vows*: Ariſe, O Sinner, and leave thy vicious Way, forſake thy former evil Courſes, and remember *what ſolemn Promiſes* thou didſt once make of a more holy and religious Life for the future. Go then to *Bethel*, the Houſe of God: Repair to the publick Aſſembly; acknowledge your Engagements, and offer *One Vow more*, viz. to put all the former in Practice. Solemnly devote yourſelves, both Souls and Bodies, to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt. Bleſs God's holy Name that you have Leave and Leiſure to reflect on what you have done, and that, though you have *broken* your Vows, yet you are permitted to ſet all *even* again by your *After-Diligence* and Faithfulneſs. Now therefore beg of God to enable you to be ever mindful of the great Obligations which you lie under. And be every Day *renewing* your former Promiſes. Conſider ſeriouſly that you are not *your own*; you have given yourſelf up to God and his Service: You have dedicated yourſelf to Religion. Oh never *alienate that* which is ſo ſolemnly *conſecrated and ſeparated* unto God. Never depart from *him* and *his* Service who is the beſt Maſter and the beſt Benefactor: But reſolve to adhere firmly to him in all conſtant and chearful Obedience to his holy Will and Laws.

WATCH-

WATCHFULNESS.

MAT. XXV. 13.

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

IF you look back to the Chapter before *this* wherein my Text is, you will find that our bleſſed Saviour propheſied there concerning the final Overthrow and Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; and that he gave *particular Inſtances* of the grievous Judgements and Calamities which ſhould befall that *City*, and the magnificent *Temple* which was the Glory of it. And likewiſe he foretold his *Laſt Coming to Judgement*, with the Manner, and Certainty of it, but the Uncertainty of the Time. For though what is there delivered by Chriſt is ſpoken primarily and chiefly of the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, yet the Generality of Expoſitors agree, that in a ſecondary and reſembling Senſe it is applied to the Laſt and General Judgement. Our Saviour having thus foretold his Coming, urges upon his Auditors the Duty of *Watchfulneſs* and Preparation, and that by divers Arguments, from the 42*d* Verſe to the End of *that* Chapter. And then in the Beginning of *This* he explains the Nature of *this Watchfulneſs* to us in a fit and excellent Parable of Ten Virgins, who took their Lamps to go meet the Bridegroom. But Five of theſe it ſeems were ſo *Unwiſe* as not to furniſh their Lamps with Oyl; for which Folly of theirs they paid very dear, for the Midnight approaching, the Shops were ſhut up, and no Oyl could be bought, and ſo they were ſhut out from the Bridegroom's Company and Converſe. *Which* being *unriddled* is no other than *this*, That if we be unready and unprepared, unfurniſhed and unſanctified when Chriſt comes to judge us, our Caſe will be unſpeakably ſad and deplorable. Whereupon our Lord *repeats* his *ſeaſonable Exhortation* which he had tendered to them in the foregoing Chapter, [*Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh*].

In the Words then obſerve, *Firſt*, A neceſſary Duty incumbent on us, [Watch]. The Chriſtian Vigills! *Secondly*, The Reaſonableneſs and Neceſſity of that Duty, [for ye know neither the Day nor the Hour when the Son of Man cometh]. *Bodily Watching* is applied here by Chriſt, (and ſo likewiſe in other Places by the Apoſtles) to the *ſpiritual Watching* or *Chriſtian Readineſs*: And the *one* will teach us the Nature of the *other*. But my Deſign is to be plain and practical, and therefore I ſhall not be over nice and critical in ſtraining the Metaphor.

This is the weighty and important *Obſervation* I offer to you from the Words, *viz.* That it is our great Duty and Concernment whilſt we live here to be watchful and vigilant againſt the Coming of our Lord. And in ſpeaking of this general Propoſition, I ſhall likewiſe have Occaſion to take in *the Reaſon and Inducement* to it which follows in the Text. But the main Task I will put myſelf upon is, to ſhew you the *true Nature* of this indiſpenſable and neceſſary Duty of *Watching*. Which will be fully diſcovered in theſe following Particulars. Watchfulneſs implies in it, 1. Knowledge and a right Apprehenſion. 2. Godly Fear and Reverence. 3. Diligence and Induſtry. 4. Readineſs and Preparedneſs. 5. Continuance and Perſeverance in all theſe. Theſe are either of the very Nature and Eſſence of the Duty, or (which is as well to our preſent Purpoſe) they are natural Reſults and Effects of it.

I begin with the *Firſt*, An *exact Knowledge of, and Inſight into thoſe Things which are required of us.* [*γρηγορεῖτε, be awake*], open your Eyes, ſee what you have to do, underſtand yourſelf aright. *Watchfulneſs* ſpeaks Intentiveneſs and Obſervation. Rouze yourſelves, recover your Senſes, which have been faſt bound up in the Night of Ignorance and Security. This evangelical *Watchfulneſs* then comprehends in it the *Knowledge* of theſe following Things.

1. It preſents us with a true Notion of our *Condition* that we are in here. Can any Man *watch* as he ſhould 'till he *knows his Station*, his Place he is ſet in, and on what Condition he is to abide there? Can we diſcharge this Spiritual and Chriſtian Employment 'till we are acquainted upon what Terms we live and act in this World? Let us know then, and ever fix it upon our Minds, that we are now in a State of Trial and Probation: We are all on our good Behaviour: As we deport ourſelves here, ſo we muſt fare hereafter. We are doing ſomething for a future Life. Ourſelves and Actions are all in order to another World. We are all running a Race; we are reaching forth to a Prize that is before us; we are preſſing towards the Mark for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus. *This World* is a *Thoroughfare* to *Another*: *This Life* hath Reſpect to a *Better*. This preſent World muſt once have a Period; this huge Fabrick which you ſee muſt be demoliſhed, theſe great Scaffolds muſt be taken down, and there ſhall be new Heavens, and a new Earth. Deceive not yourſelves then with falſe and fond Imaginations concerning this Place you breathe in, or concerning your State and Condition here. Remember that it is *relative*, and hath immediate Reſpect and Tendency to what is to *come*. It looks beyond this dark Earth and all its Shadows, and even unto that Light which is all-glorious and eternal. Let us not then be miſtaken about this firſt and great Principle of our Knowledge, *viz.* that we are in *this* Life Probationers for *another*.

2dly, We are to have a right Notion of *the Things of this World*, *i. e.* to be thoroughly perſuaded of the Vanity and Emptineſs of all earthly Enjoyments, Poſſeſſions and Entertainments which we have in this State of Probation. *Firſt*, There is a Weakneſs and Imperfection in them; they cannot ſatisfy us: They are Shadows in Reſpect of our *Souls*, which are ſubſtantial. Alas! Theſe Things are not able to fill the boundleſs Deſires of our immortal Minds. Nothing but the Infinite, Eternal, and Unchangeable God can repleniſh thoſe vaſt and wide Capacities. Again, There is a Power in theſe earthly Things to afflict us. They are not only Vanity, but Vexation of Spirit, (as the wiſe and experienced King had long ſince caſt up the Accounts, and given in the World's Inventory.) They often, too often create Grief, Anguiſh, and Perturbation in our Souls, both in our Purſuit after them, and Poſſeſſion of them, and moſt of all when they are ſnatched from us: Then a Piece of our Hearts is as it were torn off. And ſhall I add alſo that they take off our Thoughts and Meditations from another Life, and from the great Employment of our eternal Salvation? They make us forgetful of Death and our laſt Accounts, and betray us to innumerable Evils and Miſcarriages. Need I tell you *like-*

wiſe, they diſcover their Vanity and Inſufficiency in nothing more than This, that they prove not advantagious to us when we have moſt Need of them; that is, in Sickneſs, and at the Hour of Death? They cannot *prevent* or *cure* a Diſeaſe: And they ſtand us in no Stead at our Departure hence. *Then* indeed they are *miſerable Comforters* and *Phyſicians of no Value*. They cannot ſhield us from the Judgements of God, they cannot divert his Wrath and Diſpleaſure, they cannot ſpeak Peace to a wounded Conſcience and a troubled Mind, they cannot reconcile us to the incenſed Majeſty of Heaven, nor commend us in the Eyes of our impartial Judge.

3*dly*, This is another Principle of Knowledge (and a neceſſary Ingredient of our ſpiritual *Watchfulneſs*), that Our Condition here is changeable and uncertain. We are Tenants at Will, and may be diſlodged To-morrow, yea before the next Minute. We are obnoxious to innumerable Kinds of Sickneſſes and Diſtempers of Body, and conſequently are liable to almoſt an infinite Variety of Deaths. A *little Thing* is able to diſcompoſe the frail Fabrick of Man; a light and ſhort Diſtemper may prove as fatal as an inveterate one. Doth not Hiſtory tells us that the Great *Tamerlane*, Lord of the *Eaſt*, died of three ſhaking Fits of an Ague? If ſome ſtrange Caſualties do not attack us, if ſome odd and fatal Accidents, if ſome ſudden Diſeaſes and Diſaſters do not unexpectedly arreſt us, yet however, by Reaſon of the natural Make and Conſtitution of our Bodies, we cannot hold out long: Theſe Houſes of Clay will ſoon be out of Repair, and fall of themſelves into utter Decay. You muſt All in a ſhort Time pay your Debt to Nature. Though ſome of you perhaps may have ſeemed by your ſound and healthful Conſtitutions to have protracted and put off Death, yet even you that have ſtaid and acted the *longeſt* on the Stage muſt paſs off, and make your Exit at laſt. You that have outlived all the Neighbourhood, and have attended on ſo great Numbers to the Grave, you muſt at length deſcend unto your Long Home, and take up your Abode in the Place appointed for all the Living. [*Though a man live many years* (ſaith *Solomon*) *and rejoyce in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkneſs, for they ſhall be many*], and they muſt be his unavoidable Portion. This Life is ſhort and fleeting, and we have here no continuing City. Death with its grim and ghaſtly Viſage makes his Approaches promiſcuouſly to all Mankind. It is true his Aſſaults were not ſo *quick* and fierce at the firſt Riſe and Setting up of the World as they are *now*: For the Sacred Hiſtory acquaints us that the Thread of Man's Life was ſpun out then to a greater Length, almoſt to a Thouſand Years; but it was ſoon cut ſhort, and Death began to make *more haſte* to the ſucceding Times. Man's Age fell from near a Thouſand to a few Hundreds, and at laſt in *Moſes*'s Time it was ſtinted and confined to threeſcore Years and ten, or at the moſt to Fourſcore (*i. e.* among the general Part of Men). And we cannot promiſe ourſelves that Dearh will not *haſten again*, and defalcate our Age, and take us down ſome Stories of Years. Our Sins deſerve it, and they may likewiſe, in the very Nature of the Thing itſelf, procure it. But if *this* happens not, yet, as the Caſe ſtands now with us, we are in this Life on very *uncertain Terms*, we cannot ſecure our Stay here 'till the enſuing Moment. Let us therefore endeavour to have always a lively Apprehenſion and Perſuaſion of *this* upon our Minds, that our *Continuance* here is not a Thing to be looked for, but that there is an inevitable Neceſſity of leaving this World in a ſhort Time, and that this Time is uncertain, *i. e.* it cannot be exactly told when it ſhall be. *This* is the Motive mentioned in my Text, [*for ye know not the day nor the hour when the Son of man* (who is alſo the eternal Son of God) *will come*], and call you to an Account for your paſt Lives.

4*thly*, Another Principle of divine Knowledge (and which is the natural and genuine Conſequence of what hath been laid down already) is, that our Life which is ſo ſhort and fickle, ought to be carefully improved and husbanded to the beſt Ends and Purpoſes. We know not what one Day may bring forth, and why ſhould we boaſt of To-morrow, and depend upon Futuriry? Since the *preſent Time* only is ours, we are engaged to lay hold on *That*, and to manage it to the great Deſign of our everlaſting Welfare. We are Creatures placed here on Purpoſe to be working out our Salvation. Let us be careful to work while it is Day; let us accompliſh our Taſk before Night overtakes us; and to that End let us aſſure ourſelves that nothing is to be done for God, or for ourſelves in another World: There is no Work, nor Device, nor Operation in the Grave, whither we are going. Let us have a Care that our *Lives do not end* before we have *begun to live*, or *thought what it is to die*. Take we heed that our Sun do not ſet before we enter upon our Work. If Sickneſs ſhould ſeize on us, it *may* be *ſo ſudden* that we may have no Time to *think* of, much leſs to *prepare* for Death. Or, the Diſeaſe may be long and lingering, ſo grievous and burthenſome that it may quite weary us, and extinguiſh the Thoughts of Death and Judgement by the continual Diſtraction which it creates. So highly are we all concerned to diſpatch the great Buſineſs of our immortal Souls with all the Speed we can, whilſt Health, and Strength, and Opportunities are offered us. I might mention *another* Point of Knowledge which is abſolutely requiſite to the diſcharging of this Chriſtian Duty of *Watching*, and that is a thorough Apprehenſion of the great and wonderful *Conſequences of Death*. Heaven or Hell, Bliſs or Miſery, Eternal Life or Death are the inſeparable Attendants of it. And thus I have finiſhed the Firſt general Head of our Diſcourſe; and I have inſiſted *the longer* on *this* becauſe it is the Foundation and Ground-work of all. Right Principles are the ſureſt Baſis of good Actions. The firſt Thing the ſpiritual *Watchman* muſt engage himſelf in is to take a *true Proſpect*, to make *right Diſcoveries of Things*. And ſo much of *Watchfulneſs* as it is oppoſed to *Ignorance* and *Miſapprehenſion*, and conſequently as it implies an exact *Knowledge* of our Condition and Quality, our Duty and Employment.

Secondly, It includes in it a godly *Fear and Dread*. Men *watch* when there is *Danger*. And thus this evangelical Duty is oppoſed to *Confidence and Preſumption*, whereby Men become neglectful of their chiefeſt Intereſt, forget the Dangers they are incompaſſed with, promiſe themſelves Health and Long Life, put off the evil Day, boldly ruſh into Ruin and Deſtruction. But true *Watchfulneſs* makes us live in continual *Fear* of miſcarrying. It makes us wary and cautious, careful to ſhun thoſe Shelves and Rocks whereon others have ſplit themſelves. It bids us beware that we neither be ſhipwracked by Storms and Tempeſts, (*i. e.* the *Afflictions* we meet with;) nor be endangered by ſudden Calms, (a peaceable and proſperous Condition.) It bids *us work out our ſalvation with fear and trembling*, or, in *another Apoſtle*'s Stile, to *paſs the time of our ſojourning here in fear*. The fixed Stars which you ſee ſhine ſo gloriouſly and undiſturbedly may (as late Philoſophers tell us) degenerate into Comets, or ſink down into dull Planets. Though we move in a high Orb, and ſhine with great Luſtre and Brightneſs, yet we may undiſcernably decline both in our Light and Station gather Scum and Filthineſs unawares, and plunge ourſelves into groſs Darkneſs. We are frail and labile Creatures, *conamur diſcedere a centro*, we work ourſelves off from our firſt Principle, we run from God, and haſten from our true Center and Happineſs. Let him therefore that thinketh he ſtandeth *take heed* leſt he fall. We are in great Danger of being ſurprized. The roaring Lyon *walks about*, which ſhould make us very intent on the Apoſtle's *walking circumſpectly*, exerciſing all Chriſtian Warineſs and Prudence. Satan is always buſy; he tempts and ſollicites us by all Artifices and Methods; he lays Snares for us in all Places and Company. The World is made up of *Vortices*, Eddies and Whirlpools, and we are like to be *drawn in*, on a Thouſand Occaſions. The World and the Devil *gild* all their Bates, paint and varniſh all the Vices they preſent to our Fancies. They endeavour to lay Men aſleep with the pleaſant Murmurs and Noiſe of *Applauſe*: They lay them on ſoft Beds, and entertain, and even intoxicate them with the *Pleaſures* of Senſe; ſo that the deluded Sinners are perſuaded to ſleep ſecurely, and never to wake 'till the Sound of the laſt Trumpet do it effectually, but with little *Refreſhment* to them. Thus we may be informed of our dangerous Condition. *Let us* (as the Apoſtle ſaith) *fear leſt, a promiſe being left us of entering into his reſt, any of us ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it.* Heb. iv. 1. Headineſs and Raſhneſs are the moſt deſtructive Things imaginable, and prove moſt fatal to us in this mortal Condition. We are concerned therefore to live in a conſtant Suſpicion of ourſelves, and to cheriſh a holy Fear, which is the *Watch* and *Sentinel* of our Souls. All our Graces are preſerved and ſecured by *this*, all Judgements are prevented, and Hell itſelf avoided by it. Be not then high-minded, but *fear.*

Thirdly, This *Watchfulneſs* implies an Act of Labour and great Induſtry, Study and Diligence, to *do* according to our *Knowledge*, to act according to our Fear. And thus *Watchfulneſs* is oppoſed to *Idleneſs* and *Sluggiſhneſs*, to a lazy and drowzy Temper, which beſots the Minds of too many in the World. *To be awake* (in the *true Notion* of it) denotes a vigorous Senſe and Motion, a free Diffuſion of Spirits throughout the whole Body. Let us then *rouze* ourſelves, and ſhake off the Poppy from our Temples, diſgorge the Opium we have ſwallowed down, and recover a perfect Senſe and Perception of Things, and move and beſtir ourſelves with a becoming Zeal and Vigour; whatſoever our Hands find to do, let us do it with *all our might.* Let us muſter up all our Forces, ſummon together all our Auxiliaries, and make our laſt and greateſt Effort, there being no Work to be diſpatched after this Life is ended. Let us then *ſtrive* to enter in at the ſtrait Gate, let us reſolve to take Heaven by a holy Violence. Whilſt we have Time, let us do Good, *all* the Good we are capable of effecting. Let us be laborious and diligent, *zealous* and *chearful* in the Ways of Piety. Which brings me to the *next* Thing implied in this Duty, and that is Readineſs and Preparedneſs.

Fourthly, To *watch* is to be in a *Poſture of Defence*, to *guard and ſecure ourſelves.* He that is ſet to *watch* on any eminent Service will furniſh himſelf with *Weapons*, to *defend* himſelf againſt the Aſſaults of Enemies and Invaders, and to *defend theſe* who have put him on that Employment. *Take unto you* therefore *the whole Armour of God: Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourſelves like to men waiting for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Bleſſed are thoſe ſervants whom the Lord when he cometh ſhall find watching.*

Fifthly and *Laſtly*, *Perſeverance* is *another Ingredient* of *Watchfulneſs.* [*Watch and ſtand faſt*, ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* xvi. 13.]. [*He that endureth to the end ſhall be ſaved*], ſaith he who beſt knew the Conditions of Salvation. [*Behold! I come quickly*, (ſaith he:) *hold faſt that which thou haſt, let no man take thy crown from thee*, Rev. iii. 11.] Conſtancy and Perſeverance crown and conſummate all our Actions. I conclude this particular with that Exhortation of St. *Paul*; [*Therefore (my beloved brethren,) be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord*].

I might ſhew you now the *Connexion* between theſe ſeveral Heads that I have inſiſted on. *Knowledge* naturally breeds a Prudent and Chriſtian *Fear.* That *Fear* begets *Induſtry* and *Diligence.* That Induſtry puts us in a Poſture of *Readineſs* and *Defence*, to guard us from all Dangers: And all theſe are perfected and compleated by *Perſeverance.*

Beſides all theſe, there are ſome *other Things* which always attend this evangelical Grace, and ſerve hugely to *promote* it. The Firſt is Sobriety or Moderation. [*Every man that ſtriveth for the maſtery muſt be temperate in all things*, 1 Cor. ix. 25.]. Whilſt Men indulge a ſenſual and voluptuous Courſe of Life, whilſt they drink and debauch themſelves, and *ſit up late* to that End, (and ſo *watch* indeed, and waſte whole *Nights* as well as *Days*;) whilſt they act thus wildly and extravagantly, they muſt needs be Strangers to the Vigilancy of a Chriſtian. A *drunken Watchman* is an Abſurdity in the very Terms. But as Drunkenneſs and Sleep, ſo Sobriety and Watchfulneſs are near of Kin. Accordingly ſays the Apoſtle, *Let us not ſleep as do others, but let us watch and be ſober*, 1 Theſſ. v. 6.]. And in 1 *Pet.* iv. 7. [*Be ye ſober, and watch unto prayer*].

Which leads me to the Conſideration of *another Thing*, (*viz.* devout *Prayer*) which wonderfully promotes the Duty I have been ſpeaking of. And therefore theſe two are joined together by our Saviour in *Luke* xxi. 36. [*Watch ye and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to eſcape all theſe Things that* *ſhall come to paſs.*] And again, in *Mark* xiv. 38. [*Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation*]. All our Endeavours will be inſignificant and uſeleſs without our fervent *Addreſſes* to the God of all Grace: For all our Strength and Sufficiency is derived from him; except the Lord keep us and help us, the Watchman waketh but in vain. But holy and earneſt *Prayer* is a fit Means to *awaken us*, and to keep us attentive and active. [*Pray we then always with all prayer and ſupplication in the ſpirit, watching thereunto with all Perſeverance*, Eph. vi. 18.] The *ſpiritual Watchman* muſt continually be upon his *Knees*. That is the fitteſt Poſture he can be in, to grapple with his ghoſtly Enemies, and to engage them with the beſt Advantage. *Theſe two happily conſpire* together, human Induſtry and divine Aſſiſtance; Man's Diligence and God's Help. Be we ever then mindful to implore the Aid and Succour of the Almighty, and (in the Apoſtle's Words, *Col.* iv. 2.) *to continue in prayer, and watch in the ſame with thankſgiving*;] viz. returning our hearty Thanks to God for his gracious Aſſiſtance.

Again, In *Watching* remember to open the Eye of *Faith*, and to look up to the Holy Jeſus. By *this*, as by a truly heavenly Optick Glaſs, you may diſcover Things at a *great Diſtance* from you: The Objects which common Eyes ſee not will be repreſented to you by *It* moſt conſpicuouſly. By this you are admitted to a new Communion with God, and you will be aſtoniſhed and raviſhed with the Diſcoveries of that Glory which you have not yet entered into, but have Leave to gaze upon. Can the Chriſtians *Vigilancy* in *this Life* be excited by a more proper and powerful Motive than the Proſpect of a *better Life* hereafter? *This bright Glory* will *keep open our Eyes*, and make us *watch*, even when we are about to take our *Laſt Sleep*. The true evangelical Faith will enable us to live all our Lives uprightly, to bear our Sickneſs and all other Afflictions contentedly, and to die chearfully. This will deſtroy in us the frightful Apprehenſions of Death, and ſupport us againſt the Sorrows of the Grave. This will cauſe us to look on Death as the Forerunner of a better and never-failing Life, and as the Harbinger and Herald of the King of Glory. To cloſe with the Apoſtle's Exhortation in 1 *Cor.* xvi. 13. [*Watch ye, ſtand ye faſt in the faith*] (and as it follows) [quit yourſelves like *Men*]. They are *Children* and *Infants* that *ſleep exceſſively*. *Faith* holds our Eyes open, and makes us *watch*, and behave ourſelves with all *Maſculine* Courage and Vigour.

And thus you have a ſhort and plain Account of the excellent and uſeful Duty of *Watchfulneſs*. It is not without *great Reaſon* ſurely that our Saviour ſo often inculcates and repeats this Duty, as here in my Text, and in the Chapter before this, in *v.* 42. and in *Luke* xxi. 36. and no leſs than thrice in one Chapter, *viz.* the xiiith of St. *Mark*. The Repeating and Urging of this with ſo much Affection and Eagerneſs, as it argues our great *Backwardneſs* to put it in Practice, our huge Proneneſs to Sleep and Drowzineſs; ſo likewiſe it plainly evinces *this*, That it is our main and neceſſary *Concern* to watch, it is the principal and important Buſineſs of our Lives, and therefore muſt be frequently urged upon us. Be perſuaded then to practiſe of it from *this* very Conſideration. And know this, that *whereſoever* you caſt your Eyes, you will find ſufficient Encouragements to diſcharge this Duty. Look *inward into your own Hearts*, and obſerve the great Failures there, and be careful to check the firſt Motions of Vice. Look on the *outward Actions of your Lives*, and think that, as you are to keep your *Hearts* with all Diligence, ſo you are equally obliged to guard your bodily Senſes, which are ſo many Inlets to Sin and Folly. Look *below you*, and view the Lake which burns with Fire and Brimſtone, the Regions of the damned and deſpairing Souls, who would give all the World, (were they Maſters of it,) to be reſtored to a Capacity of working out their Salvation, to enjoy the Means and Opportunities which you now are in Poſſeſſion of, and ſo ſhamefully neglect. Look *above you*, and behold Heaven, the Receptacle of *glorious Souls*, *who* fought *here* the good Fight of Faith, and *there* are receiving their triumphal Laurels and Crowns. The Sight of *that Place* is able to bribe you to a godly and religious Life, becauſe it will abundantly make you Amends for all the Hardſhips and Difficulty you can poſſibly undergo in the Ways of Holineſs. Look *behind you*, and ſee how much Time is paſt, never to be retrieved and called back again. Look *before you*, and let theſe Two Things take up your ſerious Thoughts, *viz.* the Shortneſs and Uncertainty of this Life, and alſo the great Task and Work that lies before you to be diſpatched.

Be deeply affected with the ſeaſonable Advice of St. *Paul* in *Rom.* xiii. 11, 12. [It is high Time for us to awake out of Sleep: The Night is far ſpent, the Day is at hand; let us therefore caſt off the Works of Darkneſs, and put on the Armour of Light; let us walk honeſtly as in the Day, not in Rioting and Drunkenneſs, not in Chambring and Wantonneſs, not in Strife and Envying. But put ye on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and make no Proviſion for the Fleſh, to fulfil the Luſts thereof.] [*Watch then in all Things*] (ſaith the ſame Apoſtle in *2 Tim.* iv. 5. or as it is in the *Greek*, [be *ſober* in all Things;] and immediately he ſubjoyns,) [indure Afflictions] *i. e.* ſuffer any Thing rather than neglect this Duty. And remember this to your Comfort, that if ye be *taken away* whilſt you *are upon your Watch*, your Condition is good and ſafe. Bleſſed is that Servant whom his Lord when he cometh ſhall find ſo doing. If you be in your proper Station, and remain conſtant in the Diſcharge of your Duty towards God and Man, the Summons of Death, or the Arrival of any other Evil, whether National or Perſonal, ought not to be unwelcome to you; but you are rather engaged to entertain the Tidings of them with a perfect Submiſſion and Reſignation to God's Providence.

* * *

AVOID
EVIL COMPANY.

PSAL. CXIX. 115.

Depart from me ye evil doers: for I will keep the commandments of my God.

AMONG the ſeveral Cauſes and Occaſions of Men's Ruin, This is not the leaſt, that they addict themſelves to Evil Company, and frequent the Society of thoſe that are wicked. Therefore whoſoever deſires to live a vertuous and godly Life, and to retain the Senſe of Goodneſs and Religion on his Mind, and conſults his own Welfare and Happineſs, muſt be very careful as to this Particular, that is, he muſt take heed whom he converſes and aſſociates with. For who is there that ſees how much *Company* conduceth either to Vertue or Vice, to Godlineſs or Wickedneſs? There is almoſt a Neceſſity that we become like thoſe whom we often converſe with. We daily receive a Tincture from them, and they from us; and this is improved at laſt into a perfect Imitation. This was obſerved by the ancient Sages, and is left expreſſed in many of their * Writings. All is ſummed up by the wiſe Son of *Sirach*, who tells us that *All Fleſh conſorteth according to Kind, and a Man will cleave to his Like*, Eccl. xiii. 16.

Hence it is that obſerving Perſons have gueſſed at the Temper and Genius of Men by the Society which they addicted themſelves to. The *Company* Men keep is a good Teſt of their Manners. And it holds good in the other Sex; as the Hiſtorian takes Notice, that *Auguſtus Cæſar* knew the Genius and Inclination of his Daughters by the Company they uſed themſelves to. Thus, one of them delighted to be always with the Senators and grave Men, the other with the wild Gallants of the Town. This is moſt certain, that as Company makes both Men and Women either good or bad, ſo one may gueſs by *That* which of theſe Two they are. The Aſtronomers obſerve of the Planet *Mercury*, that it is always of the Nature and Quality

* Ὡς αἰεὶ τὸν ὅμοιον ἄγει θεὸς ὡς τὸν ὅμοιον. *Hom. Odyſſ.* ς.
Τοιοῦτος ἐστιν ἕκαστος οἷσπερ ἥδεται ξυνών.

Accede ad pinguem, & pinguis fies. Prov. Judaic.
Pares cum paribus facillimè congregantur.

lity of that Planet with which it is joined. Moſt Men then are mercurial, they take the Impreſſions, they imbibe the Qualities and Tempers of thoſe Perſons with whom they continually aſſociate, and are (as I may ſo ſay) in Conjunction with. Such as their Company is, ſuch will they be. You may obſerve therefore, that the Avoiding of wicked Converſe and Society is the very firſt Thing which the holy Man *David* begins his Book of *Pſalms* with. [*Bleſſed is the man* (ſaith he) *that walks not in the counſel of the ungodly, nor ſtands in the way of ſinners, nor ſits in the ſeat of the ſcornful,* thoſe Sinners that ſcorn and mock at Religion]. *Ungodly Converſe and Society* is well expreſſed by Walking in the Counſel, Standing in the Way, Sitting in the Seat of theſe wicked Men. *This* therefore is the *firſt Thing* the Pſalmiſt lays down, This is the *Ground-work* of all that follows, *viz.* to ſhun all Converſe and Familiarity with vicious Men. Walk not, ſtand not, ſit not with them, hold no Correſpondence with them, for you cannot be of the Number of the *Bleſſed* if you do ſo. And he backs his Advice by his own Example and Practice, in the Words of my Text, [*Depart from me ye evil doers: for I will keep the commandments of my God*].

As if he had ſaid, avaunt ye wicked ones, be gone hence ye vile Inticers, away with ſuch Plagues of Mankind, ſee me no more for the future, come not near me: And for my Part I will keep far enough from you, I will never approach to your Borders. There is a *Neceſſity* of my quitting you, and of having nothing to do with you, for I am *reſolved* to keep God's Commandments, I purpoſe to live a holy Life. But, before *you are gone* I cannot do it; unleſs I be rid *of you,* I cannot ſet about that Work. Therefore be gone: I hate and abhor your Society, I will never converſe with you any more. I ſay to you now as it ſhall be ſaid to you at the Laſt Day by the great Judge of Heaven and Earth, *Depart from me ye that work iniquity.* I cannot hope to be acquitted at that laſt Tribunal, if I do not thus deal with you. After this Manner you may ſuppoſe the holy Penman of the Text to have ſpoken. And at your Leiſure you may peruſe the whole CI Pſalm, which is *David*'s *Defiance* of *Evil Company.* He reſolves to *walk within his houſe with an upright heart,* and not to go abroad to wicked Aſſociates. He *hates the work of* ſuch Men (he ſaith;) yea, he profeſſes that [*he will not know a wicked Perſon*], he will not hold Acquaintance with ſuch a one, but *his eyes ſhall be upon the faithful, and they ſhall dwell with him*; but as for Men of an other Quality, they *ſhall not come within his houſe, they ſhall not tarry in his ſight.* Thus that holy King and Prophet declares his Abhorrence of *vile and ungodly Companions.* And his royal Son tenders Advice of the like Nature, *Prov.* iv. 14. *Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.* And again, *Prov.* xiv. 7. [*Go from the preſence of a fooliſh man, when thou perceiveſt not in him the lips of knowledge*]. When thou findeſt his Diſcourſe and Converſation to be vicious and ungodly, diſpute not with thy ſelf whether thou ſhouldeſt leave his Company or no: But forthwith go from his Preſence, leave him to himſelf, and do thou ſeek for better Aſſociates, or elſe ſit alone.

Would you know the true *Reaſons* of this? There are theſe Two. *Firſt,* Evil Company leads Men into Sin; *Secondly,* Into Miſery and Deſtruction. And one would think this is ſufficient to diſparage and diſgrace it.

Firſt, I ſay, we are let into Sin and all Manner of Vices by wicked Company. That Heathen had good Reaſon to ſay, That * *Evil Communications corrupt Good Manners*; for *Menander,* a Heathen Poet, was the Author of that Sentence, though St. *Paul* was pleaſed to quote it afterwards, and to inſert it into the Canon of the holy Scriptures. It was even the Senſe of the wiſeſt Moraliſts among the *Gentiles,* that we ought not to converſe with impure and prophane Perſons, and that Theſe are great Impediments to Vertue and Religion. The natural Light and Reaſon of Mankind taught them this. Accordingly, it was one of *Pythagoras*'s Symbols, * Shake not Hands with every one you meet, be not promiſcuouſly acquainted with all Perſons, but chooſe your Company. Which is fully and emphatically expreſſed by *Solomon, Prov.* xxii. 24, 25. *Make no friendſhip with an angry man* (and it holds good concerning all other vicious Perſons, and therefore you may

* Φθείρουσιν ἤθη χρηστ᾽ ὁμιλίαι κακαί. 1 *Cor.* xv. 33.

* Μὴ παντὶ ἐμβάλλειν δεξιάν.

ſuppoſe

ſuppoſe it as ſpoken in general. Make no Friendſhip with a Man that is uſually overcome of any Sin, whether it be Anger or Luſt, or Intemperance, or the like,) make no Friendſhip with ſuch a one, and *with ſuch a man thou ſhalt not go*, that is, thou ſhalt not familiarly converſe. And in the next Words obſerve the Reaſon of this Advice, *Leaſt thou learn his ways, and get a ſnare to thy ſoul*; leſt thou be infected by him, leſt thou be taught by his Example to do as he doth, leſt thou be inveigled into Sin, and ſo enſnared and entrapped.

This is Reaſon ſufficient (if there were no other) to move us to ſhun the Converſation of lewd and diſordered Perſons. We ſhall *learn their Ways* if we hold Fellowſhip with them: We ſhall be like them if we aſſociate with them. I have read that *this* is one of the *Italian* Proverbs, *Who keeps Company with the Wolf, will learn to howl.* The *Meaning* is eaſily known, and daily *Experience* convinces us of the *Truth* of it. You will *reſemble* thoſe whoſe Society you frequent: You will learn the Manners of thoſe whoſe Company you affect. *This* therefore ought to be well conſidered by you, that you may avoid the Converſation of the Wicked. *Xeirembergius*, a learned *Spaniſh* Jeſuit, is of the Opinion that the *Body of Man* is *magnetical*, and he attempts to prove it by ſeveral Arguments. But if he had undertook to prove that the *Soul of Man*, or (if you will) Man made up both of Soul and Body is indued with a *magnetick Vertue*, he might have made good his Aſſertion, and all experienced Perſons would have been of his Opinion. The *attractive Power* that is in Men is every Days Obſervation. They *draw* one an other to Sin and Vice; and if their be a *ſet Society* of Sinners, the *attractive Quality* is the ſtronger, the Magnetiſm is the more powerful. The Force of this Attraction, or Contagion, (or whatever you will call it) is better known and felt than it can be expreſſed. It was *Seneca*'s Obſervation long ſince, that * there is not a Sinner that we aſſociate with but inſenſibly infects us, tho' we are not aware of it, tho' we cannot deſcribe the Manner of it. Our Saviour compares it to *Leaven*, bidding his Diſciples take heed of the *Leaven of the Phariſees*, *i. e.* their corrupt Doctrines and Manners. And the Apoſtle enjoyns the *Corinthians* * to *purge out the old Leaven*, *i. e.* their former Sins; and the Reaſon of this Injunction is intimated in the ſame Place, *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*; as much as to ſay, Sin is diffuſive, and ſpreads its Infection: Like Leaven it taints the whole Maſs, and corrupts the whole Man. *Eve* was firſt infected, receiving the Contagion from the Serpent, or rather from Satan in his Figure; then *Adam* catched it, and he propagated it to all Mankind. Ever ſince the vicious Ferment hath wrought, and one Man corrupteth another.

* *Nemo non aliquod nobis vitium vel neſcientibus allinit.* Epiſt. 7.

* 1 Cor. v. 6, 7.

What the Apoſtle ſaith of *prophane and vain bablers*, that * *their word will eat as doth a canker*, is as true of the Manners and Lives of ſuch Perſons, they are a continual *Gangrene*, eating and feſtering: By Converſation they ſpread their virulent Humour, and they corrupt and mortify even the ſoundeſt Parts. *Jacob*'s Flocks by looking on the ſtreaked Rods brought forth ring-ſtreaked and ſpotted Cattle. The Power of *Evil Company* is as remarkable upon Men; yea, ſometimes even by a ſlight Converſe, by a tranſient Looking as it were on one an other, they communicate their Spots and Blemiſhes, they impart their Sins and Vices. The infectious Eye-ſhot of the *Baſilisk* is mentioned among ſome natural Hiſtorians: He kills, they ſay, with his Looks. It is certain that in the Aſſemblies of wicked Aſſociates they do as it were look one an other into Vice and Villainy, which are mortal and deſtructive to them. Their *Countenances* teach Prophaneneſs, their *Geſtures* inſtruct in Wickedneſs, and all that they *ſay* and *do* patronizes Ungodlineſs. There is a ſtrong Malignity and Contagion in *Evil Converſe*, Diſeaſes are catched, and Venom is communicated. The Common Swearer ſoon breeds an Inclination in others to ſwear raſhly and prophanely. The intemperate Perſon eaſily inſinuates into thoſe he converſes with a Deſire of drinking intemperately. The Whoremonger and Adulterer are impatient to draw others to taſte of forbidden Pleaſures, and they are ever perſuading them to believe that ſtolen Waters are ſweet: And, in ſhort, every Sinner is willing to make Proſelytes to his particular Vice.

* 2 Tim. ii. 17.

If you intend then in good Earneſt to apply yourſelves to Vertue and Godlineſs, you muſt in the Firſt Place diſcharge theſe Aſſociates; if you are deſirous to enter in at the ſtrait Gate, by no Means take theſe looſe Companions with you, for they will neither be able to enter themſelves, nor will they ſuffer you to do it. Seriouſly conſider what a great Check and Stop theſe put to all holy Deſigns, and how they are continually alluring you to all Manner of Vice. Aſſure yourſelves that if you embrace their Fellowſhip, your Minds will be debauched and corrupted; you will firſt be cold and indifferent towards Religion, and then you will be hardened in your Sins, ſo that all Senſe of Goodneſs will be taken away, and at laſt, if you continue to aſſociate with them, you will be inraged againſt Religion and Goodneſs, and you will deteſt and abhor all that is Vertuous and Praiſe-worthy.

But *Secondly*, The Company of the Wicked will not only betray you to *Sin*, but expoſe you to *Ruin* and *Deſtruction*. That this will be your Doom the wiſe Man hath long ſince foretold, *Prov.* xiii. 20. [*A companion of fools ſhall be deſtroyed*]. And this hath been the Acknowledgement of all underſtanding and conſiderate Men in the World. * Woe be to the wicked Man, and Woe to thoſe that adhere to him, and aſſociate with him, ſaith *Ben Sira*. And even the *Pagans* of old thought that there was a Curſe went along with thoſe who kept Evil Company. To inhabit, or to travel with an impious Man, and one not beloved of the Gods, was held by them to be unlucky and unfortunate.

* *Væ improbo, & væ adhærentibus ei.*

Vetabo qui Cereris ſacrum
Vulgavit arcanæ, ſub iſdem
Sit trabibus, fragilemq; mecum
Solvat phaſelum. As * *Horace* ſpeaks.

* *Lib.* 3. *Od.* 2.

To dwell under the ſame Roof, or to ſail in the ſame Yatch or Pleaſure-boat with prophane Perſons, was deemed unſafe and dangerous by Men of *Pagan* Principles. How much more then ought *Chriſtians* to be throughly perſuaded of the Miſchief and Danger of converſing with wicked Men? It can no Ways be ſafe to hold Correſpondence with them. Yea, we are in great Danger all the while we are with them. You have heard, I ſuppoſe, who it was that would not ſtay in the Bath ſo long as an Arch-Heretick was there. It was St. *John* the Evangeliſt; he would not (as * *Irenæus* acquaints us) remain in that Place becauſe *Cerinthus*, who denied the Divinity of Chriſt, was then preſent there. That holy Man thought no Place was ſafe where ſuch Perſons are.

* *Lib.* 3. *cap.* 3.

Therefore be mindful of the Apoſtles Exhortation, and * *come out from amongſt them*, liſten to that Voice from Heaven, *Come out, that ye be not pertakers of their ſins, and that ye receive not of their Plagues.* Separate yourſelves from them, leſt you not only indamage your Souls, but your Bodies, leſt ſome remarkable Judgement arreſt you here, and leſt the divine Vengeance more furiouſly aſſault you hereafter. The fanciful Poets tell us that *Theſeus* and *Perithous* (a Pair of intimate Friends) loved one an other ſo well that they went down to Hell together. I am ſure it is no poetical Fiction that *many* do *thus*, *i. e.* that they periſh together, and deſcend into the bottomleſs Pit for *Company* ſake. They are ſo taken with one an others *Society*, that they muſt needs be damned together. Their *Friendſhip* is to ſend one an other to the Devil: The Effect of their *mutual Converſe* is to diſpatch one an other to Hell. This is a deplorable Thing which I relate; but it is too common and too true. This is the miſerable Conſequence of converſing with the Wicked. Therefore we cannot but think it highly reaſonable to bid farewell to the Clubs and Combinations of theſe Men, and wholly to relinquiſh their Society, unleſs we are in Love with our own Miſery and Ruin, and that both in this World and an other.

* 2 *Cor.* vi. 17.

Let me now ſpend ſome Time in *applying* what hath been ſaid. I will compriſe all in theſe three Particulars.

Firſt, Be very *ſenſible* of this important Doctrine which I have been diſcourſing of. Here are in this mixt Aſſembly ſome *young* Men, and others of *riper* Years, who, it is likely, have been invited into vicious and lewd Company, and have born their Part ſome Time in it. Let me requeſt you that you would ſeriouſly conſider what I have at this Time ſuggeſted to you. How many Thouſands every Day (in one Place or other) periſh by Evil Company. You may ſee the ſad Inſtances of This in every Town: (I wiſh you did not in *this*). *Bad Company* is the Charm, the powerful Charm by which ſo many are drawn into the Love of Sin and the Commiſſion of it. They will not refrain from their *debauched Society*; *That that* proves the Cauſe of their Deſtruction. Yea, the worſt of Company-keepers are heard ſometimes to confeſs this with their own Mouths; when a fatal Sickneſs ſeizes them, then they cry out of their *Bad Company*, then they reſolve they will bid adieu to their lewd Aſſociates.

Oh that you would think of this *now*, whilſt you are in *Health*; Oh that you would remember that there is nothing ſo *miſchievous and deſtructive* as wicked and debauched Society. Evil Companions are the Devils Inſtruments and Agents, they are Embaſſadors from the Prince of Darkneſs, Emiſſaries of the infernal Pit. They are employed on Purpoſe to work our Ruin in this World and the next. Satan aſſaults you in them, as he did *Eve* in the Serpent: He ſends them to tempt you, to entice and allure you to your Ruin. Theſe helliſh Aſſociates plot your eternal Deſtruction, deſign to make you as well as themſelves everlaſtingly miſerable, although they ſeem to be very kind and loving, very obliging and endearing to you. That then which I requeſt of you is, that you would be truly apprehenſive of this, That one great Cauſe of Mens miſcarrying is their delighting in wicked Fellowſhip. This is that which damps and ſtifles all Religion, and makes Way for all Vice and Wickedneſs. Remember to live conſtantly in the *Senſe* of this, that nothing is more pernicious and miſchievous than lewd and debauched Aſſociates.

Secondly, Be prevailed with then to hold no Converſe, to have nothing to do with this Sort of Perſons. You muſt, as much as you can, ſhun Commerce with them even in civil Affairs. Not that I mean you ſhould never trade with thoſe that are wicked. Then the Shops would be empty, the Market would be thin, and Trading would be dead indeed. It is impoſſible for thoſe of you who are Perſons of Buſineſs and Traffick wholly to avoid Commerce with ſuch Men; therefore *that* which I urge upon you, and require of you is *this*, That you would hold no *Familiarity* and *Intimacy* with them. Maintain no *Friendſhip* with ſuch, do not frequently, and with Delight and Pleaſure joyn yourſelves to them. The Apoſtle bids us live peaceably with *all Men:* But the Peace we are to maintain with the Perſons of all Men muſt not proceed to a near Communion with the openly Prophane. Whatever you do, let me deſire you that you would not make theſe Men your Familiars, and Boſom-Friends. Enter not into *Affinity* with ſuch; frequent not their Society, court not their Acquaintance. Let me tell you, if you have any Goodneſs in you, it is *againſt your Nature* to converſe with them. Contraries cannot agree. [*What Concord hath Chriſt with* Belial, *what Communion hath Light with Darkneſs?* The *Queſtion* is an *Anſwer*, and that a Negative one. There is no Concord, there is no Communion between them. Contrary Deſires, Affections and Ways are not reconcileable: Therefore there is no *Poſſibility* of your Agreement. *Plato*'s Aphoriſm is a noted one, * That which is pure cannot be mixed with that which is impure: There it no Fitneſs of one to the other. I know not how true that is which ſome of the Ancients have aſſerted, that the Feathers of Eagles will not mingle with thoſe of other Birds. It may be this (as ſome other Things) was ſaid to repreſent ſome higher Matter to us, to ſet forth the Deſparity and Diſagreement between Good and Evil Men. They will not *ſuit* if they be put together; there is no *Affinity*, no *Alliance* between them. Therefore know this, that whilſt you aſſociate with wicked Perſons, you do in vain pretend to Vertue and Goodneſs, for theſe are inconſiſtent with the Love and Allowance of Vice, which thoſe bad Men are ſo infamous for. Beſides, The *Evil Effects* which I have told you attend your Converſe with wicked and lewd Companions, ſhould deter you from aſſociating with them. Their Company will prove *evil* to you, becauſe they will invite and inveigle you to ſin; they will draw you off from Vertue and Goodneſs, and they will cauſe you to diſpleaſe God and all good Men. The *Poyſon* of *their* Converſe will *infect you*; and you muſt *needs* ſuck in the Contagion, and cannot help it: For *they* will ſooner form *you*, and render you like them, than you will be able to change and alter their Manners.

But

* Μὴ καθαρῷ καθαροῦ ἐφάπτεσθαι οὐ θεμιτὸν ᾖ.

But perhaps you will ſay, when you go into ſuch Company, you always reſolve to reſiſt their Temptations, you go with Intentions to comply with them in nothing that is wicked and unlawful, therefore you think you ſhall not receive any Infection from them. I am ſo charitable and favourable as to believe that you ſpeak the Truth, that is, that you *intend not*, when you go into ſuch Company, to do all that you ſee them do; I will in Charity think that you reſolve to guard yourſelf from their Temptations. Nay, I do not doubt but there are many beſides you who go not with a *ſet Purpoſe* to be Drunk, to Quarrel, to Fight, to Swear, Rail, and Blaſpheme; and commit other Diſorders of the like Nature. But yet theſe Men who *never intended* this, have been guilty of this; they have complied with all the Folly and Madneſs of their Fellows, and they have added ſome of their own. Theſe Men, who went not with *Intentions* of being wild and extravagant, lewd and prophane, when they came thither were pleaſed with what they ſaw and heard, and returned back with a Love to it, and were not quiet 'till they repeated their Wickedneſs; and ever after were reſtleſs and diſſatisfied as long as they were debarred of ſuch Practices. Say not then, *you purpoſe*, *you intend not* to follow the Example of thoſe lewd Men whoſe Company you keep. You may as well in the Time of the Peſtilence enter into a Houſe viſited with that Diſtemper, and ſit down and converſe with the People there, and ſay, you intend not, you deſign not to catch the Plague; you are reſolved you will not be infected. This is as good Senſe, and as reaſonable and allowable as what you ſay and do. You boldly venture among the Infected, and yet you cry, you had no Intention to receive the Contagion. For Shame ſpeak not, act not after this abſurd Manner.

If you are certified that ſuch and ſuch Perſons are Men of a lewd and debauched Life, if you know that they are addicted to prophane Swearing, to immoderate Drinking, Gaming, laſcivious Dalliances, Whoredom, Revelling, or any the like Exorbitances; I ſay if you know this, you need no other Diſſuaſive from their Company. *You know the Men and their Communication*, therefore you are unſpeakably guilty in purpoſing (notwithſtanding this) to joyn yourſelves to their Society. And you are juſtly puniſhed when you come amongſt them, by being permitted by God to act thoſe Wickedneſſes which you ſee done by thoſe Companions. This is the deſerved Penalty of your Venturing, this is your juſt Reward of your bold and unwarrantable mixing yourſelves with thoſe whom you know to be Haters of God and all Religion.

Now then, before it be too late, ſee your Folly, and be heartily ſorry for it, and (which is the chief Thing) practiſe it no more. You know ſuch Perſons to be vile and ſcandalous Livers: On this Ground alone come not near them, but always keep as far from them as you can. Forbear coming within the Circle where the Evil Spirit is uſually raiſed. If you are ſo daring as to hazard yourſelves in it, I fear you will ſoon find the diſmal Effect of it. For Vice is catching, Evil Company diffuſeth its Contagion before you are aware. This *Leaven* will taint you, this *Gangrene* will mortify you, this *Cancer* will run and diffuſe itſelf, and eat and devour you without Remedy. But you muſt know that this Malady corrupts and infects no Parts but thoſe which are near it, yea, next to it. Remember then to keep at a Diſtance, and ſo you ſecure yourſelves. Dare not to approach thoſe diſeaſed, infected Perſons, by no Means be ſo far ſeduced and miſled as to go nigh them, and to herd with thoſe prophane and ungodly Men. Go not into their Aſſemblies, enter not into their Secrets. Aſſure yourſelves of this, that the Counſels and *Ways of the ungodly ſhall periſh*, Pſal. i. 6. and for that Reaſon be careful to avoid their Society, have nothing to do with them; fly from them, and be ſafe. We ſee that Men are very ſollicitous to avoid and prevent the Spreading of the Peſtilence by retiring and keeping from publick Concourſe. You muſt do the ſame here: If you would not be infected go not into their Company: If you would not contract their Diſeaſe, and thereby periſh, come not near them. Fly from them as from a Serpent, leaſt they ſting you mortally. Thouſands and Ten Thouſands have periſhed by the venomous Wounds they received from them: See that you be not of that Number. That you may not, the beſt Courſe you can take is to ſeparate yourſelves from, and not *touch*, *the unclean Thing*. So it was, that under the *Law* that which was *Unclean* made all that *touched* it unclean. It is thus in the preſent Caſe: If you but *touch* theſe unclean Perſons, if you do but approach to them, and come near them, you will be unclean, you will defile and pollute yourſelves; you will be corrupted in your Hearts and Lives, you will learn and practiſe the Vices of thoſe whoſe Fellowſhip you keep.

I have inſiſted the longer on this Head, and have the more warmly urged it upon you, becauſe it is of ſo great Concern in theſe Days. There never was more Need of Preaching this Doctrine than now, becauſe the Nation was never ſo guilty in this Kind. Therefore you ſee it is a ſeaſonable Subject, and I hope it will be as effectual. This Age is grown ſo corrupt and depraved, and the Effects of Evil Company are ſo common and obvious in all Places, that it became neceſſary for me to inlarge on this Subject, and to ſet before your Eyes the miſerable Fruits of offending in this Kind. And now let me intreat you to lay to Heart what I have ſaid, and ſeriouſly to ponder this important Point. Be exhorted, as you tender the Salvation of your Souls, to abandon all evil Aſſociates; as you are deſirous to arrive at Heaven and Happineſs, be not found in the Company of vicious Comrades, mix not yourſelves with the Wicked, hold no Converſe with the Prophane, but be very careful and curious as to the Choice of your Companions.

Before I paſs to the *next Inference*, I find myſelf obliged to ſtay awhile, that I may return Anſwer to an *Objection* which ſome will be apt to raiſe againſt what hath been ſaid. Againſt the foregoing Exhortation you ſhall hear them cavil after this Manner, It is impoſſible we ſhould obſerve and practiſe it, ſay they, for it runs counter to the very Nature and Genius of Mankind which is ſociable, and delights in Converſe and Company. Wherefore this is an unreaſonable Reſtraint which you would put upon us, namely to debar us of Society; for as the Caſe now ſtands, there are very few good Men in the World, we can ſcarcely find any to hold Converſe with, and therefore you muſt pardon us if we take ſuch Company as we can get, which generally is wicked and debauched. If we do not embrace the Society of bad Men, we muſt be forced to ſit alone, and that we hope you will not require of us. We do not deſire to be driven into a Deſert: Nor to take up with the melancholy Retirement of the Cloyſter. We cannot live without Company; and if there be none to be had but that which is ſo evil, it is none of our Fault, it is the general Misfortune of the World, and we cannot help it. And truly we are of Opinion that this Fault being ſo general and common as it is, ought to be excuſed upon that Account. For why ſhould you blame us for doing that which moſt men do? Do you expect that we ſhould be ſingular, and vary from the reſt of Mankind? Why ſhould we be afraid to act as the Generality of Men in the World do? Why ſhould we be more preciſe than they? If we do as others do we hope we ſhall fare as well as they fare, and that is ſufficient. To this goodly Plea I anſwer

Firſt, Though Man by Nature be a ſociable Creature, and loves Converſe, yet notwithſtanding this, it is far better to live ſolitarily than to aſſociate with thoſe whoſe Principles and Lives are corrupted, and who make it their Buſineſs to entice Men to Sin and Wickedneſs. Our reaſonable Nature doth not dictate that we ſhould be *ſociable* in this Senſe: No, it bids us avoid the Society of wicked and debauched Livers; and it dictates this to us, that it is more eligible to ſit alone than to be in ſuch Company. Nay, let me adviſe you to this Expedient: In order to keeping yourſelves out of Evil Company, uſe yourſelves to be without any. Often retreat from the Croud, and be in private: Accuſtom yourſelves to your own Company, and confer with yourſelves and your own Conſciences: And this will correct that Folly which I have been diſſuading you from. But

Secondly, The World is not ſo bad but that you may (if you will give your Mind to it) find out ſuch Aſſociates as are really good and religious. Bleſſed be God the Infection of Vice is not univerſal: The Contagion of Debauchery and Prophaneneſs hath not over-run the Manners of all Men. There is ſtill a Remnant that keep themſelves unſpotted from the World. Every City, and Town, and Pariſh affords ſome of theſe. So that you have no Reaſon to bemoan yourſelves as if you were debarred of all Society, and that you muſt be confined to Solitude. But

Thirdly, Suppoſe you live where good Company is exceeding rare, where you cannot chooſe out ſuch Companions as truly fear God, and keep a Conſcience void of Offence both towards Him and Men; yet be it known to you, this is no Reaſon why you ſhould frequent the Society of thoſe who are profeſſedly wicked and irreligious. Ill adviſed is that Traveller who leaves the right Way becauſe he ſees but few or none in it, and chooſes the wrong one becauſe he knows he ſhall have good Store of Company there. Ill adviſed is that Sinner who forſakes the Ways of God and Goodneſs, and walks in the Ways of Wickedneſs and Prophaneneſs, becauſe he meets with but little Society in the Former, but very numerous Throngs of People in the Latter. *Company* and *Example* are a very unreaſonable Allegation in this Caſe. I appeal to thyſelf, O Sinner, whether *Company* be not a weak and inſufficient Argument. Is it not clear that it is ſo, becauſe thou doſt not make Uſe of it in *other Caſes*, where thou mightſt *as well* uſe it as *here?* Wouldſt thou not be willing and content to get the Profits of the World, to be rich, and to attain to an Eſtate, although *moſt* of thy Neighbours were poor and mean? It would pleaſe you well enough to be *wealthy alone*; you would not complain of your *Riches* becauſe the *greateſt Numbers* about you were not ſo well ſtocked and moneyed as yourſelf. Now then, if *Company* or *Example* be not powerful *here*, why ſhould you plead it *for your Sins?* Or if you can be *rich alone*, why cannot you be *good alone?* You are content to be ſingular in one, why are you not as willing to be ſo in the other? You can give no Reaſon for it; but only you are powerfully led away by your corrupt Inclinations, and love to be ſo.

Fourthly, Whereas you ſay, *you ſhall fare as well as others*, I pray let me aſk you this Queſtion, Do you underſtand what you ſay? Do you think that *to be damned* is *faring well?* I beſeech you reſolve me That. Doth not the holy Book of God acquaint us that the Way to Heaven and Happineſs is not much troden, that very few are ſaved, that the Gate is ſtrait, and the Way narrow that leads to Bleſſedneſs, that the greateſt Numbers of Men follow their own wicked Inventions, diſpleaſe God to pleaſe themſelves, and reſolve to perſiſt in their Evil Courſes, altho' they run into eternal Flames? This is the ſad and deplorable Condition of the *Generality* of Mankind: And now, are you content *to fare as they do?* Will you plunge yourſelf into everlaſting Burnings, becauſe the common Herd of Men do ſo? Will you ſin for Company, and then be damned for Company? Think ſeriouſly of this, you that ſay, Why ſhould we be *ſingular?* If others keep bad Company, what Reaſon is there that *we* ſhould not do the like? Why ſhould *we* be ſo coy and ſqueamiſh? Why ſhould we be contracted and ſtrait-laced? Why ſhould we live by ſuch ſneaking Principles as to be afraid to do the ſame Things that others do? I will tell you briefly *why*, namely, becauſe by ſo doing you will certainly partake of their Puniſhments: If you ſin as they do, you will likewiſe ſuffer as they ſhall. If you affect to tread in the broad Road, you muſt be reminded alſo *whither* that Road leads, *viz.* to everlaſting Perdition.

From this Conſideration the foregoing *Objection* will appear to be very idle and inſignificant, beſides, that it is moſt pernicious and dangerous. It is no other than the Suggeſtion of Satan, that malicious Spirit, who breathes after the Deſtruction of Mankind. It is the fooliſh Arguing of perverſe Men, who wilfully deceive themſelves, and plot their own Ruin. But what ſaith the Scripture? That Dehortation is peremptory and not to be evaded, *Thou ſhalt not follow a multitude to do evil*, Exod. xxiii. 2. This Text is ſufficient of itſelf alone to baffle the fond *Objection* of Sinners who are wont to excuſe their Addicting themſelves to Evil Company by alledgeing the *many Examples* of thoſe who do ſo. They are forbid here to *follow a Multitude* of Sinners. Tho' Offenders be *many*, yet that will not juſtify and authorize them in their Offences. The great Croud of Sinners is (to ſpeak freely and impartially) a huge Company of Men that ſhall periſh everlaſtingly. And will this encourage you to follow their Example? I trow not. For ſhame, be not miſled by falſe Apprehenſions of Things, but underſtand yourſelves aright, and know what is your true Intereſt. Be not born down by *Example*, be not invited to ſin with the *moſt*, and to deſtroy yourſelves becauſe you ſee that *others* are ſo mad and daring as to do ſo. Lewd and debauched Men will *think it ſtrange that ye* *run not with them to the ſame Exceſs of Riot*, and they will *ſpeak Evil of you* if you do not: But mind not what theſe Men ſay, for they are no competent Judges in the Caſe: Value the Approbation of the Good, conſider what God, and Angels, and holy Men will think of you if you embrace the Fellowſhip of the Wicked: And conſider the unſpeakable Danger and Miſchief you incur thereby. And ſo I proceed to my *next Inference* from the Premiſſes, with which I will conclude.

Thirdly and *Laſtly*, If Evil Company be ſo great an Impediment to all Vertue and Goodneſs, and be attended with ſo great Evils and Miſchiefs, then learn hence to prize and value the Society of thoſe that are good, and to joyn yourſelves to them. [*He that walketh*, (*i. e.* he that converſeth) *with wiſe men ſhall be wiſe*, ſaith *Solomon*, Prov. xiii. 20. for as Vice is catching, ſo is Vertue. *Fortes creantur fortibus, & boni bonis.* Goodneſs is propagated as well as other Qualities. God hath appointed vertuous and holy Society to be a Means of producing Vertue and Holineſs. We read in the Scripture Records of the *New Teſtament*, that Health proceeded from the very *Garments* and *Shadows* of the Apoſtles, and therefore the Infirm endeavoured to get as *near* them as they could. That was in an extraordinary and miraculous Manner; but it is ordinary and uſual that ſpiritual Health is the Effect of *approaching* to thoſe that are godly and righteous, and having *Converſe* with them. Thoſe that come nigh to them, receive Good from them: For they impart Goodneſs, they ſcatter Vertue and Holineſs. The *Hebrew* Word [*Ach*] is both *focus* and *propinquus*, a *Fire* and a *Neighbour*. Whether we ſpeak of good or bad Neighbours, it is applicable, for the Latter are a Fire to kindle Vice in us; and as to the Former, it is certain that we are *warmed* by their Zeal and fervent Love of Goodneſs. Converſing with a good and religious Neighbourhood *inflames* Mens Deſires of Goodneſs, and kindles a Fire of Affection even there where nothing but Coldneſs and Indifferency were before. Be greedy then of the Society of the Good, run into their Embraces, hold the moſt intimate Correſpondence with them, place yourſelves under the warmeſt and moſt powerful Influence of their Preſence. Do you know of any vertuous good Man in the Neighbourhood, in the Pariſh, in the College, one that truly fears God and walks in his Ways, and is a ſincere Lover of Jeſus, be deſirous to have the Acquaintance of ſuch a one. Make no Friendſhip but with ſuch as are Friends and Lovers of God, ſuch as will advance your Friendſhip and Acquaintance with him. When you chooſe out Perſons to converſe with more intimately, and to make your Confidents, let them be Men of religious Principles and holy Lives, Men that converſe with God and an other World. Theſe will prove Friends indeed, and perform all the Parts of that noble and lovely Relation. I could obſerve to you that 'twas the Senſe of the improved Moraliſts of old, that there can be Friendſhip only among good Men. Properly and ſtrictly ſpeaking, there is none any where elſe. This * *Zeno* the great Maſter of the *Stoicks* maintained. This *Cicero* defends in his † *Lelius*. This *Seneca* well expreſſes after ‡ this Manner, *A wiſe Man only* (who in the *Stoicks* Language is a *good Man*) *knows how to love*; *he only is a Friend, and no body beſides him.* Wherefore let us be ambitious of the Society and Friendſhip of good Men, as knowing that this will be really beneficial to us. For as *Moſes*'s Face ſhone when he converſed with God, ſo in a due Proportion will your Countenances ſhine when you hold Converſe with good Men, and ſuch as labour to reſemble God. By Familiarity with them you will become like them, and your Lives and Manners will be conformed to theirs.

The Sum then of all is this; You ſee how it is your Intereſt, as well as your Duty, to enjoy the Converſation of the Godly, to be able to ſay with *David*, *I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy Precepts*, Pſal. cxix. 63. for the Company of thoſe that are good is an admirable Incitement to Vertue and Holineſs, and will powerfully promote the Love of Goodneſs in your Hearts, and the Practice of it in your Lives. But on the contrary you ſee how reaſonable, yea, how *neceſſary* it is that you ſhould ſhun the Society of the Wicked, that (according to St. *Paul*'s Direction in *Rom.* xii. 2.) you

* Ἡ Φιλία ἐν μόνοις τοῖς σπουδάιοις. *Laert. in Zen.*

† *Niſi in bonis Amicitia eſſe non poteſt.*

‡ *Solus Sapiens ſcit amare, ſolus Sapiens amicus eſt.* Ep. 81.

you *ſhould not be conformed to this world*, that you ſhould not in your Converſation faſhion yourſelves according to the Will and Pleaſure, the Ways and Manners of worldly Men; that you ſhould not take *Them* for your Rule, nor follow their Steps; for if you do ſo, you muſt needs tread in the *Broad Way*, which will unavoidably lead you to *Deſtruction* and *Damnation.* For *This* it one great Reaſon why ſuch vaſt Numbers of Men every Day periſh, and are eternally undone, as well as they and their Family ruined here, *viz.* becauſe they delight in the Fellowſhip of thoſe that are vicious. Therefore I ſay unto you again, as you love your Souls, as you regard your Salvation, and as you value your temporal Welfare, embrace the Society of thoſe that are good and holy, and forſake all wicked Converſe.

Gluttony and *Drunkenneſs*

To be Avoided.

Luke xxi. 34.

And take heed to yourſelves, leſt at any time your hearts be overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, and cares of this life, and ſo that day come upon you unawares.

OUR Saviour having in this Chapter diſcourſed concerning the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* and the End of the World, (of which the *Former* was an Emblem and Repreſentation,) calls upon his Hearers to Watch and Pray, and to be ready and prepared for his Coming; and becauſe they cannot be *prepared* unleſs they lay aſide worldly Cares and diſtruſtful Thoughts, and likewiſe live ſoberly and temperately, in a conſcientious Uſe of God's Creatures with Moderation, he adjoyns this ſeaſonable Caution in the Text, [*Take heed to yourſelves leſt at any time*, &c.] As if he had ſaid, Baniſh immoderate Care and Sollicitude; let not the Things of this Life trouble and moleſt you, vex and torment you; but yet do not give yourſelves up to *Careleſsneſs and Security*, to Idleneſs and Sottiſhneſs, to Luxury and Lewdneſs, to Intemperance and Debauchery. Let not your *Hearts* be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenneſs, ſet not your *Minds and Affections* on thoſe unmanly and unbecoming Vices; diſtemper not your *Bodies* by indulging yourſelves in thoſe wicked Courſes. For the Word καρδίαι which is here tranſlated *Hearts*, may (becauſe it is of an ambiguous Signification) denote that Part of the Body which hath *that Name*, together with the inward *Affections*, which are often ſtiled the Heart, and may ſignify alſo the *Stomach*, which hath ſometimes that Denomination among the *ancient Phyſicians*. So that it may indifferently refer both to *Surfeiting and Drunkenneſs*, and likewiſe to *the Cares of this Life*; that our *Stomachs* be not overcharged with the Former, nor our *Hearts* with the Latter.

Of the firſt of theſe I am to ſpeak at preſent, Take heed to yourſelves leſt at any Time you be gorged with exceſſive Eating and Drinking. Let not your Stomach be *overcharged* (a very proper Word in this Matter), let it not be *burdened* and *loaded* either with *Meat* or *Drink*, for theſe two are mentioned by our Saviour here. The Former is called *Surfeiting*, *i. e.* Glutting and Surcharging the Stomach with too much Eating: The Latter is called *Drunkenneſs*, which is a Loading the Body with exceſſive Draughts of Wine or any other ſtrong Drink. Thus you ſee *what* our Saviour offers to you in the Words which I have read unto you: It is no other than the excellent Grace of *Temperance*, which is a Moderation in Meat and Drink. By Moderation I mean not any auſtere Pinching of your Bellies: I am not commending to you ſuch a nice and regular Courſe of Eating and Drinking as is preſcribed by Phyſicians in ſome Caſes, which they call a *Diet*. I do not adviſe you to conſult with *Leſſius*, or that demure *Venetian Cornarus*, who *weighed* his Meat and Drink. Nor yet do I remit you wholly to the *Primitive Diet*, which is thought to have been the *Fruits of the Earth* only, a * Repaſt without Blood, a † Supper of ſuch Things as the Ground yields, without being beholding to any Animals. Our Forefathers in the firſt Ages fed on Herbs and Roots, and quenched their Thirſt at the pure Stream. As for Sauce, they knew no other than Hunger and Salt. But I ſhall not endeavour to confine you ſo ſeverely. Seeing the Primitive Temper and Conſtitution of Men is decayed, I do not think it reaſonable to tie you down to *their* Way of Eating and Drinking. The *Complexion* of Mankind is alter'd; and ſo it is no Wonder that their *Food and Repaſt* are ſo likewiſe. All that I can exact of you is *this*, that you would live ſoberly and temperately in the Uſe of thoſe Refreſhments which God hath vouchſafed to you. Affect not Riot and Exceſs, keep within Bounds, moderate your Deſires and Appetites as to Meats and Drinks.

* —— *ſine ſanguine cœna.* Horat.

† *Cœna terreſtris.* Plin.

To this excellent Vertue is oppoſed * *Intemperance*, *i. e.* an immoderate Affection and Uſe of Meat and Drink. This indeed is a Vice of ancient Date. Eating was the firſt Fault: Indulging the Appetite and Eye was the firſt Offence. Liquoriſh *Eve* longed to taſte the Fruit: A Reſtraint on her Appetite being uneaſy to her, ſhe muſt needs pleaſe her Palate and gratify her Taſte. Ever ſince, Greedineſs and Gluttony have taken Place in the World. *Eſau* was a notable Inſtance of an ungoverned Appetite, and an impatient Deſire of ſatisfying his Palate: Which made him buy his Meſs of Broth at ſo dear a Rate. The ancient Gluttons ſpoken of in *Pagan* Story were *Sardanapalus*, and *Vitellius*. This laſt, becauſe of his exceſſive Gormandizing, purchaſed to himſelf the Name of * *Platter-Knight*. And of *Tiberius*, an other great Glutton, *Suetonius* tells us, that he ſpent two Days and a whole Night in Eating and Drinking only. He was ſuch a vaſt Drinker that he was called *Biberius Mero* inſtead of his own Name. And that he liked this Vice in others as well as in himſelf appears from this, that he dubbed one a Knight for taking off three Gallons of Wine at a Draught, and named him *Tricongius*. This was that *Tiberius* who erected a *New Office*, for the deviſing and finding out of New Pleaſures; ſo *inſatiable* was he grown in his *Intemperance*. *Geta* the Emperor had his Diſhes ſerved up at his Table according to the firſt Letters of the Names of the Meat which was contained in them. This *Alphabetick Glutton* was of great Note in thoſe Days, and ſo was *Caligula* in his Time, who was horribly *profuſe* in his Intemperance; for he uſed to drink off the moſt coſtly Pearls diſſolved in Vinegar. *Apicius*, who lived in *Seneca*'s Time, was a great Profeſſor of Gluttony, and was the Author of a certain Sect of Cooks (in Imitation as 'twere of the Philoſophers) who ſtudied the Art of Luxury, and invented New Ways of providing Pleaſures for the Taſte. Of *Philoxenus* it is related that he made this wild Wiſh, *viz.* That he might have the Neck of a Crane, that ſo he might be the longer Time taking down his Food, and conſequently feel the greater and more laſting Pleaſure in it.

* *κραιπάλη, i. e. crapula.*

* *Patinarius.*

Nay, *Intemperance* was adopted into *Philoſophy*. *Epicurus*, or his *Followers* at leaſt, *read Lectures* of Exceſs and Riot. Senſual Pleaſure was voted by them the Chief Good and Happineſs of Man. They denied a Deity and Providence; but in the mean Time their *Belly* was their *God*, the Kitchin their *Chappel*, and the *Cooks* their only *Prieſts*. There have been great Numbers of ſuch *Epicureans*, though *no Philoſopers*. The *Chineſe* count all their Good in this World to conſiſt in *Eating*; and therefore their Words of Courteſy and Salutation when they meet one an other are, * Have you Eaten or no? And not only among *Infidels* doth this Epicuriſm prevail, but even in *Chriſtian Countries* it may be obſerved that it is grown a Vertue among too many. This Diſcourſe is deſigned to be applied to ſuch, and here *Firſt* I will ſet before you the *Miſchief* of *Surfeiting* and *Drunkenneſs*: *Secondly*, I will lay down certain *Rules* by which you may direct yourſelves in the Uſe of Meats and Drinks: *Thirdly*, I will *help* you in the Practice of thoſe Rules: And *Fourthly*, I will conclude all with a ſerious *Recollecting* of the whole, and *Exhorting* you to lead your Lives according to this Doctrine.

I. I will attempt to ſhew you the *Evils and Miſchief* of theſe Sins which our Saviour here cautions us againſt. Be it known to you then, that miſerable are the Effects and Fruits of theſe Vices. Gluttony and Greedineſs drove our firſt Parents out of Paradiſe. Our Grandmother *Eve* ruined all her Poſterity by One Morſel. We read, that the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs began firſt to ſhew their contumacious and rebellious Temper, when they wanted Water. *Thirſt* was the firſt Cauſe of *Murmuring*: And the next (as you may inform yourſelves from that Sacred Hiſtory) was *Hunger*. Deſires of Meat and Drink proved pernicious to them. But we have more direct and evident Proof of the miſchievous Conſequences of Exceſs in this Kind. When the Lords of the *Philiſtines* had dedicated a Day to Feaſting and Drunkenneſs, and when their Hearts were merry, and they fancied they had freed themſelves and their Country from the Deſtroyer, (for ſo they ſtiled *Samſon*,) then in a ſhort Time you are acquainted with the Reſult of that extravagant and debauched Aſſembly, namely, that by the juſt Judgement of God they all periſhed by the Fall of the Houſe, *Judg.* xvi. When the *Amalekites* were fluſhed with Victory, and had *ſpread themſelves abroad upon all the earth*, eating and drinking and dancing becauſe of all the great Spoil they had taken, *David* with his Army fell upon this ſecure and luxurious Hoſt, and recovered all the Spoil, and made them pay their Lives a Forfeiture for their Inſenſibleneſs and Sottiſhneſs, their inſatiable Luxury and Debauchery, 1 *Sam.* xxx. 16, *&c.* *Amnon* met with the juſt Recompenſe of his Drunkenneſs and intemperate Mirth, as well as of his lewd and unnatural Folly, when he was ſmote to Death at the Feaſt which *Abſalom* invited him to, 2 *Sam.* xiii. 28. When *Belſhazzar* King of *Babylon* was feaſting and revelling, he was on a ſudden ſurprized with that ſtrange Hand-writing on the Wall, which made his Joynts ſhake: And at the ſame Time *Cyrus* with his Army broke in upon him, *Dan.* v. Thus the Pſalmiſt's Curſe doth happen very frequently to Men of luxurious Lives, *their table becomes a ſnare to them*, Pſal. lxix. 23. Their Entertainments and Feaſts prove a real Miſchief and Ruin to them. The *rich man's faring deliciouſly every day* was a Prologue to his Deſtruction, *Luke* xvi. They tell us that *Heliogabalus* uſed to bring his Paraſites into Dining-Rooms that had deceitful Floors, and thence they fell and were deſtroyed. This is but an Emblem of the Ruin which attends thoſe who are addicted to immoderate Eating and Drinking.

Beſides what I have ſaid already, I will farther ſhew you the pernicious Effects of this luxurious Practice in theſe Five Particulars.

1. This Vice is generally fatal to Mens *Eſtates*, as the Wiſe Man obſerves, and therefore diſſuades from this Folly, *Prov.* xxiii. 20, 21. [*Be not among wine-bibbers, amongſt riotous eaters of fleſh, for the drunkard and the glutton ſhall come to poverty*]. *Hence* it appears that the Drunkard and Glutton are *both* great Sinners, and that their Sins meet with a *Puniſhment* even in this Life. The luxurious *Board* empties their *Coffers*; the *Table* devours their *Houſe* and *Land*. The prodigal Son's Luxury brought him to the ſervile Work of Feeding Swine: And his own high Feeding ended in Husks. *Sardanapalus*'s Epitaph may ſerve ſuch a one even when he is alive, *He hath no more left him than his Carcaſs which he once pampered*, but now begins to be *poor* and *meagre* too. Here it might be proved that Luxury is attended with *Poverty*, becauſe it is the Mother of *Sloth* and *Idleneſs*, which conſtantly procure Want. The *Cretians* are called by *Epimenides Slow Bellies*, i. e. *Idle Gluttons*: Or, ſome think this is an Antiphraſis, and *Slow Bellies* is put for *Nimble Eaters*, as the *Germans* * call

a Dull

* *Purchas Pilgr.*

* *Minſew.*

a Dull Slow Fellow, a Dromedary. Yea, the * *Greek* Word may be tranſlated *quick* or *diligent* (for there is a *contrary Signification* of that Word), and ſo the *Cretians* are checked here for their Quick Eating and Nimble Devouring: But yet ſo as theſe great Eaters may deſervedly be called *Slow Bellies*, becauſe exceſſive Eating and Luxury are the Parents of *Sloth*, which uſually uſhers in *Penury* and *Scarcity*.

* Ἀργος } *piger & celer.*

2. How unſpeakably pernicious is this Sin to the *Body* as well as the *Eſtate*? An immoderate Indulging the Palate, an exceſſive Cramming injures the bodily Health: But a ſound Conſtitution and good Temper are generally the Attendants of a ſpare Diet. *Socrates* never needed Phyſicians all his Life, becauſe he was ſo exactly temperate. It is obſerved not only of him but of *Maſſiniſſa* and *Mithridates*, that they were Perſons very healthful and long-lived, which is imputed by the Ancients to their Temperance in eating and drinking, which they were famous for. The ſame may be ſaid of *Plato*, *Democritus*, *Hippocrates*, *Galen*, whoſe orderly and regular Courſe of Life was accompanied with Length of Days. An Inſtance of this we have in the *Eſſenes*, who (as *Joſephus* relates of them) were long-lived becauſe of their ſpare Diet. The ſame may be ſeen in the two famous Hermites *Paul* and *Anthony*, in *Paphnutius*, *Hilarion*, *Macarius*, *Epiphanius*, *Jerom*, and many of the holy Fathers who lived very near an Hundred Years? and ſome of them exceeded that Age. This may be attributed in a great Meaſure to the ſober and frugal Diet which they accuſtomed themſelves to, and is a known Prolonger of Life. *Cato* the Elder was ſenſible of this, and ſhewed it by an unuſual Kind of Specimen; for when he was Cenſor, all Phyſicians were expelled out of *Rome*, and out of all *Italy*, becauſe he would have *Temperance* to be the only *Phyſick*.

Of the Man that uſeth Moderation in Eating the wiſe Son of *Sirach* ſaith rightly, [*He fetcheth not his Wind ſhort upon his Bed. Sound Sleep cometh of moderate Eating*: He (that is, the temperate Eater) *riſeth early and his wits are with him: But the pain of watching and choler, and pangs of the belly are with an unſatiable man*, Ecclus. xxxi. 19, 20. What he here ſaith is founded in the very Nature of the Thing itſelf; for moderate Eating ſubſtracts the Fuel of Diſeaſes, by clearing and draining the Body of malign Humours, by abating the Quantity and mending the Quality of the Blood: But on the contrary, moſt Maladies have their Riſe from irregular Diet; the higheſt Feeding generally cauſeth a dangerous *Plethorie* in the Body, and the Product of that proves to be Diſeaſes, and thoſe ſometimes the worſt and moſt noiſome. So that if the Body be the Soul's *Priſon*, as the *Platoniſts* ſay, the Sin of Intemperance and Luxury makes it even a loathſome *Dungeon*. Their *Throats* may truly be called an *Open Sepulchre*: Their Eating becomes fatal: He that dreſſeth their Meat is a right *Carnifex*, a *Slaughter-man*, as in the *Hebrew* Tongue a *Cook* and an *Executioner* are ſignified by the * ſame Word: And ſo the Captain of *Pharaoh*'s Guard, the great Fighting Killing Man, is called by the *Septuagint* * *the Chief Cook*. How killing, how mortal are the Sins of Gluttony and Luxury? But on the contrary, thoſe that are moderate in their Diet, do not ſtarve themſelves, but ſome Diſeaſes; and by that excellent Governing and Regulating themſelves preſerve Health and a good Plight of Body.

* *Tabach.*

* Ἀρχιμάγειρος.

Here under this Head it might be proved, that notwithſtanding Men plead for the Sin of *Luxury* becauſe they find it accompanied with *bodily Pleaſure*, and ſo is, they ſay, not injurious to their *Bodies*: It might be proved (I ſay) from the Nature of the Thing itſelf, that this Sin hinders their bodily and ſenſual Pleaſure: For Intemperance ſuffers no Pleaſure to have its right and genuine Taſte, and conſequently is a great Enemy to corporeal Delight. For this muſt be acknowledged, that the ſharpeſt Edge of Pleaſure is blunted and almoſt worn away by uſing it too much. Too conſtant a Fruition glutteth, and ſo is attended with Diſlike and Anoyance. The often Repeating breeds Satiety, which takes away all Sweetneſs, and ſo is no longer pleaſurable. But a convenient Abſtinence creates and provokes an Appetite, and thereby cauſeth Pleaſure. Moderation upon this Account heightens our ſenſual Delight; and without this the moſt poinant Meats and Sauces will not affect and reliſh, but be flat and dull, and altogether inſipid. Immoderare Eating and Drinking furr the Palate, and viciate the Taſte, and ſo there can be no right Guſt where Intemperance rules. Briefly, Exceſs and Luxury inſtead of being pleaſant, are moſt afflictive to us, and *therefore* God hath *forbidden them* becauſe they are ſo, and do us the greateſt Hurt. It muſt be thus unleſs theſe Men can make it out, that becauſe they find *ſome Kind* of Pleaſure, (this they will ſtill maintain,) therefore they cannot *hurt*, and that there is no *Shipwrack*, if it be in an Ocean of ſtrong Liquor. This is to ſay that the Duke of *Clarence* was not drowned, becauſe it was in a Butt of *Malmſey*; if a Man periſhes by Drink, it is no Deſtruction. But

3. This Sin is injurious not only to the *Body* of Man, but to his *Mind* and *Soul*, his better and more refined Part. For * the Body being oppreſſed and overburthened with exceſſive Eating and Drinking weighs down the Soul, and almoſt cruſhes that divine and ſpiritual Eſſence in us. Its Operations are ſtifled and choaked, its Faculties are rendered dull and uſeleſs, and the excellent Spirit which was made to look up to Heaven bows down to the Earth, becomes groſs and carnal, and is plunged into Dirt and Mire. A clear Underſtanding is rarely the Companion of intemperate Feeding and Drinking, becauſe the loaded Stomach affects the Brain, and clouds the Reaſon. Whence *Men* become *Brutes*, as thoſe *Cretians* we ſpoke of before are called *Evil Beaſts*, as well as *Slow Bellies*. But Temperance (as the * *Greek* Word, according to ſome Etymologiſts, denotes) carries *Soundneſs of Mind* with it. This preſerves the Judgement, and cauſes it to dictate aright. *Wiſdom* is the Gift of *Sobriety*; the ſuperior Part of the Soul is calm and ſerene, and enjoys itſelf, and ſo Reaſon is in its full Vigour. But Exceſs in Meats and Drinks infects the Soul. It is ſtifled in its own Fleſh, and it is drowned in too rank a Blood. In ſhort, the Underſtanding is miſerably corrupted, ſullied ond defaced, and all the other Offices and Functions of the Mind are diſordered.

* ———— *Vides ut pallidus omnis*
Cœnâ deſurgat dubiâ, quam corpus onuſtum
Heſternis vitiis Animum *quoque prægravat unà,*
Atque affigit humo divinæ particulam auræ.
Horat.

* Σωφροσύνη.

4. Luxurious Eating and Drinking are the Nurſes of *Wantonneſs* and *Uncleanneſs*. For Luſt and lewd Deſires are fed and nouriſhed by Immoderation in Meat and Drink. It is ſo in the very Nature of the Thing itſelf, and Experience eſtabliſhes, and confirms the Truth of it in Plenty of Inſtances before our Eyes every Day. It is commonly ſeen that thoſe who keep Houſes of publick Entertainment, and who pamper themſelves, as well as adminiſter to others Luxury, are generally more inclinable to Lewdneſs than other Perſons, beſides that they have greater and more frequent Temptations to it: Whence perhaps it is that the * ſame Word in the *Hebrew* ſignifies an *Harlot* and a *Victualler* or *Hoſteſs*. But on the contrary, Temperance and Moderation in Feeding are the Parents of Chaſtity, by being helpful to mortify the Fleſh, and to preſerve the Body pure and clean. And therefore this is the Reaſon why holy Men are wont to imitate the bleſſed *Paul* in † *keeping under his Body, and bringing it into Subjection.*

* *Zonah.*

† 1 *Cor.* ix. 27.

5. *Contempt* and *Diſgrace* are the juſt Reward of Luxury. In the ſacred Tongue (which is ſuppoſed to carry greater Myſteries in it than any other) ‡ the Word which ſignifies a *riotous Perſon* or a *Glutton*, ſignifies alſo a *contemptible* and *vile Perſon*. Which may intimate to us the near Affinity that is between Diſgrace and Gluttony. For how unworthy is it of a Man to lead the Life of a Brute, to wallow in ſenſual Pleaſure, and to place his Happineſs in it? Wherefore we ſee that Perſons of this Character are reputed vile and ignominious by all thoſe who have a true Senſe of Things: And we ſee that by the common Conſent of Mankind thoſe who have ſpent their fair Inheritances in Riot and Debauchery are the miſerable Purchaſers of *Infamy* and a *loathed* Name. Thus I have briefly ſet before you the *Miſchief* of this vile Courſe of Life. I have ſhewed you that *Surfeiting* and *Drunkenneſs* are the Peſts of Body and Soul, of Eſtate and Good Name.

‡ *Zolel.*

II. I am to lay down certain *Rules* and *Directions* whereby you may order yourſelves aright in the Uſe of the Pleaſures of *Meat* and *Drink*. Theſe are Things natural and neceſſary, and therefore lawful and innocent in themſelves.

ſelves. And I might obſerve to you that Nature intended that we ſhould enjoy this harmleſs Delight with ſome Exquiſiteneſs, for there are two Pair of Nerves for that Part of the Body which is for *Taſting*, whereas there is but one ſingle Conjugation of them for any other of the Senſes. You have the free Uſe of all the Creatures that are ſerviceable to this Purpoſe. There is no *Jewiſh* Diſtinction of Meats now under the Goſpel. All are common, and you have Liberty to enjoy them all. It is that *Arabian Impoſtor* who forbids his Diſciples the Pleaſure of the Grape and of Swines Fleſh. But no Creature is locked up from us by the Founder of our Religion: We have Leave to taſte of them all. And that *Feaſting*, which is a more ſolemn and coſtly Eating and Drinking, is not unlawful in itſelf may be gathered from this, that the great Example of all Holineſs and Purity, our Lord and Maſter was no Enemy to theſe innocent Intercourſes of Gladneſs, but honoured the Wedding-Feaſt at *Cana* in *Galilee* with the firſt Miracle he wrought: Yea, when their Stock of Wine was ſpent, he was pleaſed to ſupply it by turning their Water into that noble Liquor. We read in *Luke* v. 29. that *Matthew* invited Chriſt to his Houſe, and *made him a great Feaſt:* So that as our Saviour's *Faſting* is recorded by the Evangeliſts, ſo his being at a *Feaſt* is more than once taken Notice of. Hence it is that ſome taxed Chriſt for a *Glutton* and *Wine-bibber*, becauſe *he came eating and drinking*, *i. e.* he was a Perſon of a free and fair Converſe, he was friendly and ſociable, and did not deny his Company at theſe innocent Refections and Entertainments. The Pleaſures then which are taken in our Meat and Drink are honeſt and commendable. We may enjoy them ſafely, if we take Care to uſe them as we ought. Here then is the main Enquiry, How we may order ourſelves in ſuch a due Manner that our Eating and Drinking may not become ſinful and unlawful. Obſerve then theſe following Rules.

1. Offend not as to *Quantity*, eat and drink no more than what is requiſite. It cannot be denied but that it is neceſſary great Families ſhould have great Tables and many Diſhes. Where there are many Mouths, it is requiſite there ſhould be Plenty of Proviſion to ſupply them. But that which I intend by this Rule is this, that every Perſon content himſelf with a due Portion of Meat and Drink, that he be not voracious and craving. *Nature* is content with ſlender Proviſion, and *Chriſtianity* maintains the ſame *Moderation. Man* hath the leaſt *Mouth* of any Creature of his Proportion, and Anatomiſts obſerve that his *Stomach* is leſſer than that in Brutes, conſidering the Proportion of the Body: Which may be ſerviceable to teach him that he muſt not be ravenous, and delight in immoderate Feeding. His very *Make* bids him not ſtuff and cram himſelf with Meat and Drink: His natural Frame tells him he muſt be no Gormandizer, that exceſſive Devouring becomes him not. Yea, let it ſhame him to ſee *Brute Beaſts* more regular than *Men*, *i. e.* they eat and drink no more than what will do them good: They generally take no more than what they want: The moſt of them know when to leave off. If you come ſhort of *Brutes* in this, you ought to be ſeverely checked and reproved. If you be always gorging, you renounce the Character of *Men*, you forget that you are rational Creatures, and deſigned and made for higher Purpoſes.

That Advice in *Eccleſiaſticus* is very pertinent here, *chap.* xxxi. *v.* 12, *&c. If thou ſit at a bountiful table, be not greedy upon it, and ſay not, There is much meat on it. Stretch not thy hand whitherſoever thy eye looketh, and thruſt it not into the diſh. Eat as it becometh a man thoſe things which are ſet before thee: and devour not. Be not unſatiable, leſt thou offend.*] So he. You muſt be ſo far from exceeding in this Caſe, that you muſt rather learn to deny yourſelf as to this Sort of Pleaſure. For it hath been a good Rule among holy Men, That we go not to the utmoſt Bounds and Extent even of Things in themſelves lawful. That you may know how to baniſh Exceſs, you ought ſometimes to impoſe upon yourſelves an Abſtinence even from what is not exceſſive. The Sum is, in Eating and Drinking chooſe rather to be too ſparing than too profuſe: Rather take too little than too much.

2. Offend not as to *Quality*, that is, be not over-curious in the Choice of your Meats and Drinks. This is a great Failing of many Perſons, they are liquoriſh and dainty, nice and delicate: There is ſcarcely any Proviſion to be found good enough for them. Therefore thoſe that labour under this Folly,

if they be not Perſons of ſome conſiderable Incomes, affect to gad abroad, and ſit at other Mens Tables, where they ſee their own homely Proviſions are far exceeded. Such a one ſaith with him in *Plautus*, * Nothing that I eat at home doth me Good. But there are others ſo extravagant that St. *Peter*'s great *Sheet*, wherein were all Manner of four-footed Beaſts of the Earth, and creeping Things, and Fowls of the Air, will hardly ſerve them for a *Table-cloth*. There are Thouſands that will not attend to that Voice, *riſe*, *kill*, *and eat*, if there be no better Proviſion. Exceſs of Feeding, and that of rare and unuſual Viands is too common a Fault. There are thoſe who will have their Diſhes hold more than *Noah's Ark* ever did. They affect *Variety*, and never think they have enough of divers Sorts of Foods: As if, becauſe God once deſtroyed *all Sorts of Creatures*, therefore they muſt do ſo in a worſe Senſe. Common and eaſily-procured Food, and ſuch as is natural and ſimple will not pleaſe them. Foreign Diſhes, yea and foreign Cooks only will ſatisfy them. Nothing will ſerve them but what is dreſſed with exquiſite Art. But this fond Delicacy is not allowable. This would juſtify the *Jews* who impute *Epicuriſm* to *Chriſtians*, as thoſe who have read the Writings of the *Rabbins* know that an *Epicurean* among them is an *Heretick*, and particularly a *Chriſtian*. We have *Solomon*'s Rule to guide ourſelves by, *Prov.* xxiii. 3. *Be not deſirous of dainties.* Hanker not after delicious Fare, be not nice and curious in your Feeding, long not for rare and exquiſite Diſhes, be ſatisfied though you are not fed with high Meats, and abound with ſtrong and generous Liquors. For this muſt paſs for an undeniable Truth, that the Pleaſures of Meat and Drink become unlawful when we are over-curious in ſatisfying our Appetites.

3. Deſire not to fare more coſtlily than is agreeable to your Condition. There are many who impoveriſh their Purſes to fill their Bellies: They devour their Meat and their Eſtates together. Therefore the wiſeſt Law-givers have endeavoured to retrench this Extravagancy: Whence we read of *Lex Cibaria*, a ſumptuary Law among the *Romans* to prohibit Exceſs at Feaſts; that they ſhould not be immoderate in their Charges, and exceſſive in the Number of their Diſhes. Yea, the Number of *Gueſts* at the *Roman Feaſts* was ſtinted, they ſeldom exceeded Nine. The Laws of *Chriſtianity* do much more forbid you to be laviſh and profuſe, to be exceſſively and immoderately expenſive in your Fare. They acquaint us that *He who provides not for his family is worſe than an infidel:* And Reaſon and Experience inform us that making of too laviſh Proviſion is the Way to ruin Families. Prodigality is a Vice in the *Chriſtian* as well as the *Gentile Ethicks*, and ſumptuous Feaſting hath a near Affinity with it. Beware then of this Sort of Profuſeneſs: Let your Proviſions of Meat and Drink be according to your Allowance and Incomes. The Actions of Men muſt differ according to the *Rank* and *Degree* they are of. And here, in the preſent Caſe before us, this ought to take Place; we muſt regulate our Expenſes in Meats and Drinks according to the Condition and State we are in. Know this, that when Perſons affect to eat and drink in a more coſtly Manner than is ſuitable to their Quality, they offend God, and commit a very great Sin, as well as act indiſcreetly and vainly.

4. Be careful that you ſpend not *too much Time* in Eating and Drinking. It is ſad to recount, what vaſt Portions of Time many Perſons laviſh away, in conſtant Feaſting and Junketing, in mere ſerving their Bellies. As the Wheels of *Watches* and *Clocks* (you may obſerve) are made with *Teeth*, ſo theſe Mens *Hours* ſeem to be meaſured by *theirs*. We read that ſome of the *Roman* Emperors ſpent whole Nights and Days in feaſting and revelling: But there are at this Day great Numbers of Perſons, who are far beneath the Quality of Emperors or Princes, and yet practiſe the ſame Debauchery. The Day will not ſerve them for their Riot and Luxury, but they take in the Nights alſo to lengthen out their wild Exceſſes. The unſeaſonable Watchings at the Wine are in theſe Days grown faſhionable amongſt us: But certainly they are one of the moſt heinous Enormities that this Nation is guilty of. I wiſh this ſo common Exceſs were ſeriouſly conſidered of by our Gentlemen and others, and that they would ſee the Folly and Wickedneſs of it. If there were only this Evil in it, that a great Deal of precious Time is loſt, this is ſufficient to convince us of the Evil of this Courſe, and to diſſuade

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* *Neque unquam quicquam me juvat quod edo domi.*

us from it. We have a vaſt deal of Work to do, we have many neceſſary and indiſpenſable Duties to perform; we muſt by no Means leave any of theſe undone. Wherefore if we ſee that any of theſe are excluded by our attending to our bodily Refreſhments, we may conclude that theſe intrench too far upon our Hours, that the Pleaſures of Eating and Drinking take up too much Time, and therefore become vicious and unlawful.

5. (And which is near a-kin to the former Rule) Make it not your grand Buſineſs to eat and drink. One would think there ſhould be no Need of ſuch a Caveat as this; but thoſe that are acquainted with what is done in the World, know that this is requiſite. For ſenſual Pleaſure is Buſineſs with a great many Men: And particularly the Pleaſure of Eating and Drinking is ſuch. This is the chief Thing they mind and purſue. The great Study of their Lives is to *fare well*. Do you not ſee how *ſolemnly* ſome carry on the great Work of Eating and Drinking, as if it were their only Employment, and they had nothing elſe to do? The brief Character which *Clemens Alexandrinus* gives of the Glutton, or the Man that minds Eating and Drinking is, * Such a Man ſeems to be nothing but *Mouth*, he is made up of *Mandible*: Eating may be ſaid to be his Eſſence. — *Animal propter convivia natum* may be his Deſcription, tho' in an other Senſe than the Poet meant it. He lives as if he were born for Board, and came into the World only to eat and drink. *Their God is their Belly*, is a ſhort Account of this Sort of Men. They devote themſelves wholly to this Service, their *Hearts* are ſet upon it, their *Mind* and *Thoughts* are fixed here, as if they had eſpouſed that Part of *Helmont*'s Philoſophy which places the *Seat of the Soul* in the Mouth of the *Stomach*. But theſe Things are unworthy of ſober and rational Perſons, who make Eating and Drinking a *Diverſion*, not an *Employment*. The Ancients never invited any to Dinner, becauſe *Buſineſs* was to be minded in the Day: But when they would refreſh themſelves with their Friends, it was at Supper, when their neceſſary Buſineſs was over. It was well ſaid by the forenamed Father, ‡ We are not to abſtain wholly from Variety of Meats, but we muſt not be ſollicitous and careful about them, we muſt not ſtudy for them. This is very *unchriſtian*, yea unbecoming us as we are *Men*, and know how to employ ourſelves far better.

6. Then theſe bodily Refreſhments of Meat and Drink are lawful and commendable, when they are accompanied with *Charity towards the Needy*; when a Man with the Freedoms of a Feſtival, and the Plenties of a well-furniſhed Table, forgets not the empty Bellies of the Poor. But on the contrary, if you pamper yourſelves, and let the Poor ſtarve, the Delights of your Table are turned into Sin and Wickedneſs. It was for this chiefly that *Dives* was ſunk irrecoverably into Hell and the Regions of endleſs Miſery; for this (I ſay) that among all his exquiſite Fare, his coſtly Chear and Variety of dainty Diſhes, he could not ſpare the Remains of any one of them for a poor famiſhed Beggar that lay at his Door. And at this Day there are too many of the ſame Character with that rich Glutton: They load their Tables with great Plenty and Variety of Proviſion, but they unmercifully omit to ſatisfy the Craving Appetites of the Poor. Take Care then that amidſt your Plenty you forget not to relieve the Wants of theſe indigent Perſons, who labour under the Miſeries of Hunger and Thirſt, and are not able to make their Condition better in this World.

7. Let your Eating and Drinking be attended not only with *Charity*, but with all other Teſtimonies of *Religion and Serving God*. Among the *Pagans* their *Tables* were ſacred. It ſhould be much more ſo among *Chriſtians*, that is, we ſhould make them ſerviceable to Vertue, and to the Promoting of our own and others ſpiritual Good. It is a Rule in *Plutarch*'s *Sympoſiacks*, that * Philoſophy ought to be mingled with Drinking. And accordingly the ancient Sages were wont to have ſerious and philoſophical Diſcourſes at their Entertainments, and even at their ordinary Meals. They uſed to read at Supper among the ſober *Romans*, as *Pliny* the younger witneſſeth concerning his Uncle: And ſo of *Phavorinus*, *A. Gellius* ſaith the ſame.

* Δοκεῖ ὁ τοιοῦτος ἄνθρωπος οὐδὲν ἀλλ' ἢ γνάθος εἶναι. *Pædag.* lib. II.

† Ουκ ἀφεκτέον ἓν παντελῶς τῶν ποικίλων βρωμάτων, ἀλλ' οὐ περὶ αὐτὰ σπουδαστέον. *Pædag.* lib. 2.

* Δεῖ φιλοσοφεῖν παρὰ πότον.

We are told that among the *Jews* the Maſter or Preſident of their Feaſts was uſually choſen out of the Order of Prieſts. And *Buxtorf* relates how the *Jews conſecrated* their *Tables*, and how they began and ended their Feaſts with Benedictions. Shall not *We* then dedicate our *Tables* to God? Shall not we here converſe in a religious and pious manner? Ought we not to diſcourſe of our great Benefactor whilſt we are actually partaking of his Kindneſſes and Favours? Shall not our Mouths at the ſame Time be filled with his Praiſes, and with that plentiful Proviſion he gives us? Shall we not take that fair Occaſion which is given us of Expreſſing our dutiful Reſentments towards him, and of Inviting thoſe who ſit down with us to be ſenſible of the divine Goodneſs and Bounty, and to live ſuitably to them? Which is the Senſe of that Saying of *R. Simeon*, * If three Perſons eat together at a Table, and rehearſe not over it the Words of the Law, it is as if they had eaten of the Sacrifices of the Dead. That is, when Friends eat together, they muſt not forget to be religious, they muſt talk of God's Law, they muſt diſcourſe of Things that are edifying and profitable; otherwiſe their Eating is abominable.

It is well known that devout *Chriſtians* of old followed this Rule, they conſtantly interpoſed Religion with their Eating and Drinking. Their Cuſtom was to have ſome Part of the Bible read whilſt they were ſitting at Meat: And at this Day this is in Practice in ſome of the Colleges of both our Univerſities. This is that which makes the Difference between the Eating of Men and of Beaſts, that the Former make Uſe of their Mouths to diſcourſe as well as eat, which the Latter cannot do. A Table without ſome good Converſe differs but little from a *Manger*. Here I could obſerve to you the Affinity of Words in other Tongues beſides the *Hebrew*. The *Greek* Word δαίειν ſignifies *diſcere* and *convivio excipere*: You may *feed* and *learn* at the ſame Time. And the *Latin*, *Sapere*, ſignifies *to taſte* and *to be wiſe*, to have a good Palate and a good Underſtanding. It is certain that I may make my *Meats* ſubſervient to *Wiſdom* and *Religion*. I can here be effectually put in Mind of my *Mortality*. I plainly ſee that my frail Fleſh ſtands in Need of daily Recruits, of conſtant Repairs. If it be not continually held up with Food, I ſink into the Grave. I may ſay, *Earth to Earth*, as often as I commit my Food to my Body. Every *Diſh* preſents me with a *Deaths Head*: As they ſay the *Egyptians* ſerved up *Such a Spectacle* at *every Feaſt* they made. But it was to a far *other Purpoſe* than what I am ſpeaking of; for a dead Man's Scull was expoſed to their View to quicken their Mirth and Jollity. *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow* (that is, ſhortly) *we ſhall die*, was the Catch they ſung. But this was a vile Perverting of ſuch a Spectacle, and I hope no Chriſtian will think of Death and Mortality to ſuch a wicked End. But that which I am offering to you now is this, that we may make good and religious Uſe of our Meats, beſides the Refection and Repaſt which we have from them. Our Tables afford Inſtruction, our bodily Food adminiſters Matter for ſpiritual Meditation.

Again, ſeeing *every Creature of God is good if it be received with Thankſgiving*, be careful that your Meat and Drink be received in *that Manner*. I could further obſerve in a critical Way, that the * *Greek* Word for *Feaſting* denotes likewiſe *Praiſing*: Which may ſuggeſt to us, that the Refreſhment we receive from Meat and Drink ſhould excite us to praiſe and extol our great Benefactor; to obſerve the wiſe Man's Advice, *viz.* to *eat our bread with joy, and to drink our wine with a merry heart*, Eccl. ix. 7. or to follow the Example of thoſe Primitive Saints, of whom 'tis ſaid, [*They did eat their meat with gladneſs, ——praiſing God*,] Acts ii. 46, 47. Let this be your Uſage as often as you are refreſhed with God's Bounty at your Tables. Sit down at them with Thankfulneſs, and riſe with the ſame pious and grateful Affection.

To be brief, Acquaint yourſelves with the *true Ends* of Eating and Drinking, and ſee that you obſerve them duly. Beſides *ſuſtaining* and *refreſhing the Body*, which are the Ends that Nature deſigned in the Uſe of theſe Things, there are *others* of a higher Quality which you are to take Notice of. God gives you his Creatures that you may by them have Health and Ability for the proſecuting the great and excellent Ends of your Creation and Redemption, namely,

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* *Pirk. Aboth.* cap. 3.

* Κωμάζειν } *Commeſſari*: *Laudare, ſeu hymnis celebrare.*

Working out your own Salvation, and making your Calling and Election ſure; as alſo the Doing Good to others, and being beneficial to the Souls and Bodies of your Brethren, and Laſtly (which comprehends the two Former) the Glorifying of God in the World, according to that excellent apoſtolick Rule, *Whether you eat or drink, do it to the glory of God*, 1 Tim. iv. 5. You muſt ever bear it on your Minds, that the daily Repaſts of Eating and Drinking are in order to *theſe* noble Purpoſes. They are not only to nouriſh and refreſh your Bodies, but it was deſigned that we ſhould be fitted by them to ſerve and honour God. But if we ſo eat and drink that we unfit ourſelves for his Service, and diſhonour his Name thereby (as we muſt needs do when we are exceſſive and exorbitant in the Uſe of theſe Things, when we are greedy and unſatiable, when we are over-nice and curious, when we are too profuſe and expenſive, when we embezel our precious Time, when we make theſe Things our Buſineſs, when we forget the Neceſſities of poor Brethren, when we † *feed ourſelves without fear*, *i. e.* the Fear of God and the Senſe of Religion, when we are unthankful and prophane) then without Doubt we make not that Uſe of theſe good Creatures which God intended them for, but we ſhamefully abuſe and miſemploy them, and we pervert the *Ends* for which theſe innocent Enjoyments are permitted to us. † *Jude*, v. 12.

But moſt viſibly and notoriouſly we do ſo, when we make theſe Accommodations and Bleſſings of our Life adminiſter to open Impiety and Prophaneneſs, when *in the Days of our Feaſting* we do what *Job* ſuſpected his Sons did, curſe *God in our hearts*, (Job i. 5.) think evil of the Ways of Religion, reproach and condemn the Strictneſs of a holy Life, and ſpeak evil of all that is good and righteous. This hath been, and is the deplorable Miſcarriage of too many Perſons, whoſe Hearts are wont to be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenneſs: *They ſay unto God, depart from us, for we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways*, Job xxi. 14. They diſregard his Laws, and take no Notice of his Judgements, and even *in that day when the Lord God of Hoſts calls to weeping and to mourning, behold*, there is nothing but *joy and gladneſs, ſlaying oxen and killing ſheep, eating fleſh and drinking wine*, Iſai. xxii. 12, 13.

Thus I have ſhewed you how the Refections of Meat and Drink become ſinful and lawful to Men, how their *Table* proves a *Snare*, and their *Meats* a dangerous *Bait*. And I have alſo ſhewed you how you ought to behave yourſelves, that this may not happen to you. If you carefully obſerve theſe *Rules* which I have ſet down, you may lawfully enjoy the good Creatures of God, you may ſafely and innocently refreſh yourſelves among all your plentiful Proviſion, you need not fear *Death in the Pot*, there will be no *Coloquintida*, no noxious and poyſonous Ingredient to ſpoil and corrupt your Pleaſures. See then that you diligently obſerve theſe Directions. And in order to this,

III. I will (according to my premiſed Method) propound to you ſome *Helps* and *Aſſiſtances*.

1. That you may not offend God by the extravagant Uſe of Meats and Drinks, begin within, and ſtrive to check your undue Appetites there. As I have ſhewed you already that Temperance keeps up the beſt Plight of Mind, and maintains ſober and prudent Thoughts, ſo it is true that ſober Inclinations and Thoughts produce Temperance and Moderation in Meat and Drink. A *ſober Mind* is the beſt Help to Sobriety and Temperance of *Body*. This may be the Meaning of *Solomon*'s Advice in *Prov.* xxiii. 1, 2. [*When thou ſitteſt to eat with a ruler* (*i. e.* when thou art at a great Man's Table, and haſt various Diſhes ſet before thee) *conſider diligently what is before thee*, (beware of the Temptation which is offered thee by ſuch a Sight): *and put a knife to thy throat if thou be a man given to appetite.*] If the Temptation be fierce, and thy Appetite eager, defeat them both by being very *ſevere* againſt them: That is the Meaning of *putting a Knife to the throat.* Not that thou ſhouldeſt diſpatch thySelf, but ſlay thy Luſt, and kill and mortify thy extravagant Appetite, which otherwiſe would ſlay and deſtroy thee. Or perhaps thoſe Words in the *Hebrew* which we tranſlate [*If thou be a Man given to Appetite*] may be rendered thus, [*If thou beeſt Lord of thy Soul*] for ſo the *Hebrew* may be taken. And the Senſe is, Now is the Time for thee to exerciſe Severity and Temperance if

thou haſt any Command of thyſelf, if thou beeſt *Bagnal nepheſh*, Lord of thy Soul, ſhew it at this Time, exert thy Dominion, curb and quell thy diſordered Deſires. Intemperance and Luxury begin at the Heart; ſtifle it there. This is the Counſel of the wiſe *Solomon*, who had been too kind-hearted in his Days, but now is grown ſevere, and bids the Man uſe his killing Weapon.

2. You may be *helped* in the Diſcharge of the Duty which I have been treating of, by underſtanding *yourſelves* aright, by conſidering your excellent *Nature* and *Make*. Let *Seneca* be your Tutor in this worthy Point of Learning, who hath theſe admirable Words, * I am a greater Perſon (ſaith he), and born to greater Things, than that I ſhould be a Slave to my Body. Moſt excellently ſpoken! Attend, I beſeech you, to this uſeful Lecture, or rather to his worthy Example. Think it below the Nature of *reaſonable Creatures* to be enſlaved to your Carcaſſes: Yea, which is much more, think it unworthy of the *Members of Chriſt* to ſerve your Bellies. Prize not ſenſual Entertainments and Pleaſures before thoſe that are ſpiritual. Do not (as *Anatomiſts* do in diſſecting a Body) prefer the lower Venter firſt. Be not of ſuch groveling and abject Spirits as to place your Happineſs in Meats and Drinks. This you will never do if you will but take Care to form right Apprehenſions concerning yourſelves, and the Employment you were created for. You have intelligent and immortal Souls, you are made and framed for noble Ends; and your Abilities and Capacities are ſuch, that you can entertain yourſelves with divine and ſpiritual Objects, which ſurpaſs thoſe of the Body. Wherefore act like rational and conſiderate Creatures, and ſuch as are throughly apprehenſive of their proper Duty, and then you will never addict yourſelves to bodily Pleaſures, you will not idolize ſenſual Delights, particularly you will never make your Bellies your Gods.

3. To antidote you againſt this Immoderation in Meats and Drinks, think ſeriouſly of the *dreadful Judgements of God* which attend this Sin. Beſides the Examples mentioned in the Beginning of my former Diſcourſe on theſe Words, when I undertook to diſplay the *Miſchief* of this Diſorder, let me here add ſome others. The Prophet *Iſaiah* gives Notice to the *Jews*, who had given themſelves up to Banquetting and Diſports, to extravagant Mirth and Senſuality, that the Vengeance of God would ſuddenly light upon them, *ch.* v. 11. *Woe unto them*, ſaith he, *that riſe early in the morning that they may follow ſtrong drink, that continue all night, 'till wine inflame them. And the harp and the viol, the tabret and the pipe, and wine are in their feaſts, but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither conſider the operation of his hands*], they at length add *Inſenſibleneſs* to *Luxury*, and then their Caſe is deſperate. Wherefore it follows, [*Therefore my people are gone into captivity becauſe they have no knowledge*], becauſe they will not underſtand either their Sin or their Danger. [*Therefore hell hath inlarged itſelf and opened its mouth without meaſure, and their glory, and their multitude and their pomp, and he that rejoyceth ſhall deſcend into it, v.* 14. Hell and Deſtruction are the juſt Recompence of thoſe who indulge themſelves in their bodily Pleaſures, eſpecially when there is the greateſt Occaſion of Mourning.

To this Purpoſe let me offer another Text to you: It is that in *Amos* vi. 1, *&c. Woe to them that are at eaſe in Sion, ye that put far away the evil day: that lie upon beds of ivory, and ſtretch themſelves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midſt of the ſtall: that chaunt to the ſound of the viol, and invent to themſelves inſtruments of muſick, like David* (not like him to praiſe God upon thoſe Inſtruments, but rather to diſhonour and blaſpheme him;) *that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themſelves with the chief oyntments* (that is, they indulge all manner of Luxury and Rioting, Softneſs and Effeminacy, profuſe Mirth and Debauchery) *but they are not grieved for the afflictions of Joſeph*, they pity not the diſtreſſed Condition of the Church, they are not affected with the publick Calamities and Diſtreſſes, they attend not to the Threatnings of the Prophets, they are unconcerned when they behold the Judgements of God hanging over their Heads, whilſt they are falling down upon them: They will not lay aſide their Mirth and Muſick, tho' the Times call for Mourning and Lamentation. They will be laviſh and prodigal in devouring the Fruits of the Earth, tho' they ſee they are not bleſſed, and that

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* *Major ſum, & ad majora natus, quàm ut mancipium ſim corporis mei.*

Scarcity and Famine are approaching. This *Inſenſibleneſs* and *Rioting* are obſerved by our Saviour to have been the wild Behaviour of the People juſt before the Flood, * *they eat, they drank,* (*i. e.* they lived in Intemperance and Luxury) *until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and deſtroyed them all.* And of the Sinners of *Sodom* the very ſame is ſaid, * *they did eat, they drank: but the ſame day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimſtone from heaven, and deſtroyed them all.* And our Saviour alſo acquaints us that it ſhall be thus when he comes to Judgement: The Generality of the World ſhall be addicted to Lewdneſs and Luxury, they ſhall not have a Senſe of their Danger, they ſhall be drowned in *Pleaſure* or *Buſineſs*, ſo that they ſhall not attend to the Judgements of God which are Forerunners and Admoniſhments of that Laſt Day. Which reminds me of the next Particular, namely,

4. Think of *Death* and *Judgement*, and the ſerious Conſideration of theſe will be ſerviceable to check you in your intemperate Courſes. You cannot be immoderate and exceſſive in the Uſe of God's Creatures, if your Thoughts be fixed upon this, that Death may ſurprize you on a ſudden, and that you may be preſently called hence to give an Account of your Actions. You read what befel *Job*'s Children, * *when they were eating, and drinking wine, and making merry in their elder brothers houſe, a great wind ſmote the four corners of the houſe, and it fell upon them, and killed them.* I will not ſay that their Mirth reached to *Intemperance*, and that they were overwhelmed and cruſhed with the exceſſive Load of Liquor as well as with the ponderous Ruines of the Houſe: But this we know, that in the midſt of their Feaſting *Death* broke in upon their Merriment, and they were deſpoiled of that and their Lives together. Thus it may be with us, even whilſt we are upholding our Lives with the neceſſary Refreſhments of Meat and Drink, they may be taken from us. How careful then, how watchful ſhould we be, how ſerious and compoſed, how moderate in the Uſe of our bodily Refreſhments, how free and diſengaged from the Vice of Intemperance? And when we conſider that after Death comes the *Judgement*, where we muſt abide the Trial of all our former Doings, we muſt needs think ourſelves concerned to live ſoberly and tempetately, and not to ſuffer the Delights of Meat and Drink to debauch our Minds as well as our Bodies. Beſides, that we know not *how ſoon* that Day may come, and even ſurprize us in our Fits of Intemperance and Debauchery. Therefore we ought to watch and be ſober, becauſe we know not the Hour when the Son of Man (who is likewiſe the Son of God, and the Judge of the World) will come. This is the very Conſideration which my Text commends to you: We are bid to take heed, leſt *at any Time* our Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenneſs, for Fear *that ſhould be the Time* when our Lord cometh, and ſo that Day come upon us *unawares*.

IV*thly* and *Laſtly*, To ſum up all that hath been ſaid, and to exhort you to the Practice of it, I beſeech you let there be conſtantly ſet before your Eyes the Nature of this important and neceſſary Duty, *viz.* Moderation in the Uſe of Meats and Drinks. You muſt carefully abſtain from all Exceſs, you muſt lead a ſober and temperate Life. This * is a Part of Philoſophy which a Man may learn of himſelf, he may have a Lecture read of it within his own Breaſt: His Mind and Reaſon will furniſh him with Arguments to inforce ſuch a plain Duty upon him. If he will but give himſelf Time to think and conſider, he will certainly ſee the Excellency and Benefit of this Chriſtian Grace of Sobriety, and he will likewiſe diſcern the Vileneſs and Miſchief of the contrary Vice. Sin and Danger ſurround the Intemperate. The Glutton and Drunkard offend God, and hurt themſelves. Indeed ſome condemn Drunkenneſs, but look upon immoderate Eating as no Sin, or a very venial one. But you muſt know that Exceſs in Eating as well as in Drinking is criminal; to overcharge the Stomach as well as the Brain is a great Offence. Yea and the *evil Effects* of Gluttony come not much ſhort of Thoſe of Drunkenneſs; I mean thoſe Effects which reſpect a Man's own ſelf, as Loſs of Time, Impairing his Eſtate, Foſtering of Wantonneſs and Lewdneſs, Clouding his Mind, and Prejudicing the

* *Luke* xvii. 27.

* *v.* 28.

* *Job* i. 19.

* *Αὐτοδίδακτος φιλοσοφία so Temperance was called of old.*

the Health of his Body: Nay, it is the Judgement of an * ancient and ſkilful Phyſician, that Intemperance in Eating is more unſafe in reſpect of Health than Exceſs in Drinking. The Deſign of my Diſcourſe at preſent is, that you would not make Trial which of theſe two is moſt dangerous to your Bodies, or on any other Account. Shun Exceſs and Immoderation in *both*, and be not ſo irrational and ſottiſh as to make the good Things which God hath given you, to be inſtrumental to the greateſt Evils.

It is a known Maxim in the *Civil Law*, † No man is permitted to make ill Uſe of what is his own. But he that abuſeth his Goods is unworthy of them, and by his Default juſtly deprives himſelf of the Uſe of them. This is certainly true in the divine Law or *Chriſtian* Inſtitution; for as God hath provided all Neceſſaries in Abundance for the Uſe of Mankind, ſo he hath ſeverely cautioned againſt the *Abuſe* of theſe his Bleſſings, allowing only the ſober and moderate Uſe of them. You read in *Deut.* viii. that after a Catalogue of the particular *Bleſſings* which God had ſet out and allotted to the *Iſraelites* in the Land of Promiſe, as Wheat and Barley, Vines and Fig-Trees, Pomegranates, Oyl Olive and Honey, Bread without Scarceneſs, and Plenty of all Things, an expreſs Caveat immediately follows againſt the *Abuſe* of theſe Mercies, [*When thou haſt eaten and art full, then thou ſhalt bleſs the Lord thy God: and beware that* thou *forget not the Lord thy God, and that when thou haſt eaten and art full, thine heart be not lifted up*, &c. *v.* 10.] God gives no Man Leave to *miſemploy* the good Things he gives him, and particularly not thoſe good Creatures which were given for the Upholding and Chearing of his Body. But on the contrary, they are beſtowed upon him that he may make Uſe of them to thoſe excellent Ends and Purpoſes which you have heard.

Be prevailed with then to underſtand and conſider your Duty aright, and to take Pleaſure in the Performance of it. Give not way to a greedy and looſe Deſiring of the Delights of the Palate, eſpecially longing for effeminate Foods and Dainties, the Vanity and Folly of which is excellently ſet forth by that pious Father * *Clemens* whom I before alledged. He, like a true primitive Inſtructer, urgeth upon the Chriſtians of thoſe Times the Practice of this Vertue of Temperance, ſhewing them how requiſite it is in the Life of every one that profeſſeth Chriſtianity, and how unworthy it is of ſuch a one to be a Servant of Meat and Drink, and to be over-curious in the Choice of them. *Temperance* is reckoned by the Apoſtle among *the fruits of the ſpirit*, Gal. v. 23. and therefore thoſe who are in Chriſt Jeſus, and walk not after the Fleſh but after the Spirit, are real Poſſeſſors of this Grace. Do *you* endeavour by all means to be ſuch, that you may have this comfortable Teſtimony in your Minds, that the holy Spirit hath effectually influenced on your Lives, and that you are governed by his Dictates. As for thoſe of you who have been very defective as to this Particular, be reminded this Day of your Folly, and repent of it. Though you have never ſo highly offended in this Kind, yet if you be convinced of the Evil of your Ways, and turn unto God, and forſake them, they ſhall be forgiven.

But then you muſt be very careful for the Future to guard yourſelf againſt this Sin, you muſt not indulge an immoderate Appetite in your Souls, you muſt obſerve that Rule which our Saviour gives in *Mat.* vi. 34. *Take no thought what you ſhall eat, or what you ſhall drink, i. e.* let not your Mind run on theſe Things; though you may and muſt provide what is fitting and ſufficient for your Suſtenance and Refreſhment, yet you muſt not ſet your Hearts on theſe, you muſt not continually buſy your Thoughts about your ſenſual and bodily Repaſt, as if it were the main Thing you were to look after, as if this were the chief Good of Man. We know that *Man* is Lord of the Creation, he hath Power given him by God over the reſt of the Creatures. Here then ſhew yourſelves *Men*, *viz.* by Temperance, Sobriety, and Abſtinence. Thus you may lord it over the Beaſts of the Field, the Fiſhes of the Sea, the Birds of the Air. You then exerciſe your Soveraignty when you ſit at your Tables, and ſuffer none of theſe to maſter your Appetite, but when you make them all ſerve you, *i. e.* be uſeful to thoſe Ends for which they were given you. Thus you are Rulers and Lords over them: Otherwiſe they are your Maſters, and rule over you. See then that you maintain your ſoveraign Power, that you aſſert your Dominion, and you cannot better do it than by conquering your fond Deſires and fooliſh Luſts, by craving no more of theſe Things than you have Need of, and by uſing them with Moderation and Sobriety. Let no unſeemly and undue Circumſtances attend your Eatings and Drinkings: Be grave and modeſt, and temperate, but above all Things mix not Irreligion and Prophaneneſs with your Table-Delights. Ever remember *who* provides for you, and from *whoſe* Hands you receive all theſe good Things. Look up to him, and implore his Bleſſing, that theſe may not prove pernicious and deſtructive to you, as they do to many, but that they may be made ſubſervient to the Health both of your Bodies and Souls, and that through the whole Courſe of your Lives you may do nothing unworthy of your Benefactor.

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* *Intemperantia tutior eſt in potu quàm in eſcâ.* Celſ.

† *Nulli permittitur re ſuâ malè uti.*

* *Pædagog.* lib. 2. cap. 1, 2.

To conclude, As Phyſicians are wont in ſome Caſes to purge the whole Body by the *Palate*, ſo it is certain that in a Way of moral Medicks the Vices of the whole Man may, in a great Meaſure, be amended and cured by taking eſpecial Care of this Part, by purging and rectifying this. Eſpecially if thoſe Perſons whoſe greateſt Vice is Intemperance, whereby they are generally led to other Diſorders, would begin with this, and endeavour to clear themſelves of it, they would find this a Step to a general Reformation of their Lives, and it is probable they would prove very uſeful Men, and ſerviceable to God and Man. Regulating *this Senſe* which is converſant about Meats and Drinks is a great Inlet to Vertue and a holy Life. If you can deny yourſelves as to this, you will the more eaſily get the Conqueſt over your other extravagant Inclinations and Deſires, and you will be able to ſubdue your moſt unruly Luſts. Therefore I call on you once again to exerciſe your Dominion here, to give all Diligence to moderate and govern your Appetite, and to manage yourſelves aright in the Uſe of Meats and Drinks, that you may not be diſtempered and overcharged with either of them, according to the Advice of the beſt Preacher, the profoundeſt Maſter of Wiſdom, and the greateſt Lover of Souls, in the Words of my Text, *Take heed to yourſelves leſt at any time your hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenneſs.*

DRUNKENNESS

More eſpecially

To be *AVOIDED.*

EPHES. V. 18, 19.

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is exceſs; but be filled with the Spirit: ſpeaking to yourſelves in pſalms, and hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, ſinging and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

* *Acts* ii. 4. WE read, that when the Apoſtles on the Day of *Pentecoſt* were *
filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and began to ſpeak with other tongues,
as the Spirit gave them utterance, the amazed Multitude flocked
together to hear this, and ſome of them *mocked* and reviled,
* *v.* 13. crying out, * *Theſe men are full of new wine,* they are inſpired
with the Grape. It is that which makes their Tongues wag after
that Rate, it is that and nothing elſe which makes them talk
ſo ſtrangely. Methinks the Apoſtle ſeems here in the Text which I have read
to you to refer to this Paſſage in the *Acts*: For firſt here the Apoſtle chargeth
the *Epheſians* that they *be not drunk with wine* (which was the Imputation
falſely laid upon the Apoſtles) *but be filled with the Spirit,* as thoſe holy Men
† *v.* 15, really were, and as you find St. *Peter* making an Apology for them, † *Theſe*
&c. *are not drunken, as ye ſuppoſe, but this is that which was ſpoken by the prophet*
Joel, [*It ſhall come to paſs in the laſt days, ſaith God, I will pour out of my Spirit*
on all fleſh, &c.]. This that you call *Drunkenneſs* is *being filled with the Spirit.*
Theſe Perſons are not loaden with Wine, as ye imagine, but they experience
a ſacred and divine Inebriation by the *Spirit's* being poured out upon them,
and infuſed into them.

And not only thus far is that hiſtorical Paſſage fitly applied, but as the wonderful *Effects* of the Apoſtles being filled with the Holy Ghoſt are there recorded, *viz.* that they * *ſpake with divers tongues, and declared the wonderful works of God*, ſo in my Text we have the like Effects of the ſame Cauſe, here is *ſpeaking* and *ſinging*, and *making melody unto the Lord in pſalms, and hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs*, which cannot have any other Subject than the great and marvelous Works of God. So that you may conceive my Text to be an Alluſion to, or an Application of that Hiſtory of the *Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt*, making it yet more uſeful to us in this Reſpect, that thence we gather what is our important Duty, and what we are concerned to practiſe. We have here then two Kinds of Inebriation, one when the Body is overcharged with Wine; this is forbidden: The other when the Soul is filled with the Holy Spirit; this is enjoyned. *Be not drunk with wine, wherein is exceſs, but be filled*, &c. Where there is obſervable firſt a Dehortation, or a negative Precept, *Be not drunk with wine, wherein is exceſs: Secondly*, an Exhortation, or poſitive Command, *But be filled with the ſpirit*, &c.

* Acts ii. 11.

I begin with the Former of theſe, the *Dehortation*, in which we muſt, 1. Take Notice of the *Vice* that we are dehorted from, *viz. being drunk with wine.* 2. The *Reaſon* of the Dehortation, in thoſe Words, *wherein is exceſs.*

Firſt, I am to enter upon the Apoſtle's Dehortation, or Prohibition, *Be not drunk with wine.* For the right Underſtanding of which I premiſe this, That Wine is one of the good Creatures of God which he hath given for the Uſe of Men. And he hath given it for theſe three conſiderable Purpoſes, Firſt, To the Inhabitants of thoſe Places where it grows, for Part of their ordinary Drink. For God hath ſo conſtituted the Nature of Man's Body that he ſtands in Need of *Drink* as well as of *Meat*. Yea, Drinking is the firſt Thing we do: As ſoon as we are born we expect the Dug: And truly the Milk we ſuck may be ſaid to be Meat as well as Drink. But afterwards when this liquid Food is laid aſide, and we arrive to ſome Conſiſtency of Body, Nature teacheth us the diſtinct Uſe of Meats and Drinks, and prompts us to call for that which will allay our Thirſt as well as ſatisfy our Hunger. Accordingly, the God of Nature hath made Proviſion for the Former as well as the Latter, having plentifully ſtocked the Earth with Springs of Water, which was the only Drink of the firſt Ages of the World; and afterwards having taught Men to plant Vines which yield a more heartening Liquor, and this either alone, or tempered with Water is at this Day the conſtant Beverage of thoſe People who live in ſome of the warmer Regions of the Earth. Providence, that takes Care of the World, hath appointed them this to drink, as well as it hath ordained other Things for Food.

Secondly, Wine was given to cheriſh and refreſh us when we are weak and languiſhing. On this Account *Timothy* was preſcribed it by St. *Paul*, *Uſe a little wine for thy ſtomach's ſake, and thine often infirmities*, 1 Tim. v. 23. Art thou weak and ſickly, Nature with her own Hand hath prepared thee this excellent and approved Stomachick, therefore do not refuſe it. And becauſe *Age* is a Kind of *Sickneſs*, we may infer that thoſe who are much ſtricken in Years have a Right to this alſo. Therefore though *Plato* denied Wine to young Men, their Blood being warm, and their Spirits brisk enough without it; yet he granted it to thoſe who were grown up to conſiderable Years, eſpecially to aged Perſons he allowed a larger Portion of it, to help and recruit decayed Nature.

Thirdly, As Wine is given to cure the Infirm and Fainting, ſo likewiſe to chear and delight the Sound and Healthy. It is lawful to drink it not only for Neceſſity but ſometimes for Pleaſure. Wine without Doubt was given us by our gracious Benefactor to delight the Taſte, and refreſh the Palate, eſpecially when Sorrow and Trouble clog the Mind, and begin to oppreſs and weigh it down. Thus the wiſe Son of *Sirach* determined long ſince, [*Wine is as good as life to a man if it be drunk moderately*, for it was *made to make men* *glad. Wine meaſurably drunk and in ſeaſon, bringeth gladneſs of heart, and chearfulneſs of mind*, Eccleſiaſtic. xxxi. 27, 28. And according to a more canonical Author we are told that Wine is given *to make glad the heart of man*, (Pſal. civ. 15.) *poor weak man*, ſo the original Word in the *Singular Number* ſometimes ſignifies in Scripture, and then it may refer to the Former Head, letting us know that Wine is given to alleviate the *Sickly* and *Infirm*. But the Word is of a larger Signification generally, and takes in all Men, the whole Race of Mankind who are ſubject to Afflictions and Sorrows in this World: They may lawfully chear their Hearts with this refreſhing Liquor, becauſe it was given to make glad the Heart, it was deſigned by Providence to be a Cordial. Perhaps thoſe Words in *Gen.* v. 29. refer to this, [*He called his name Noah, ſaying, This ſame ſhall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, becauſe of the ground which the Lord hath curſed.*] *i. e. Noah* by planting the *Vine*, and teaching the Uſe of it, ſhall *comfort* us in the midſt of our Work and Labour, (and ſo his very Name ſignifies): And the generous Fruit of the Vine, that makes the Heart of Man glad, ſhall be ſome Recompenſe to us for the Miſchief which came by God's *curſing the Ground.* The joyful Vine will compound for the troubleſome *Thorns* and *Briars*. In the Midſt of our Sorrows and Toil we may ſolace ourſelves with the temperate Uſe of this Gift of God.

Theſe are the true *Ends* and *Uſes* of Wine: And we may lawfully partake of it to theſe Purpoſes. This is vouched by God and Nature, by Reaſon and Convenience, by the Practice of them of old, and by the Example of the beſt in all Ages. That is a general Permiſſion which you read in *Eccl.* ix. 7. *Drink thy wine with a merry heart.* We may rejoyce in God whilſt we joyfully uſe his good Creatures. Chriſt even at the Expence of a Miracle changed Water into Wine, to chear the Gueſts of the Marriage Feaſt, and he often drank it with his Apoſtles, and at his Laſt Supper hallowed it after an extraordinary Manner, and ordained it to be a perpetual Symbol of his Blood. Though it is ſaid St. *Paul* met his Friends at the *Three Taverns* (Acts xxviii. 15), yet I cannot certainly thence gather that they met to *drink*, much leſs that they drank *Wine*, for the Word *Taberna* ſignifies any Houſe or Dwelling, Tent, Booth, or Tabernacle. But it ſignifies alſo an *Inn*, or Publick Houſe to divert into upon the Road: And conſequently St. *Paul* and his Friends might divert themſelves there in the moderate Uſe of the Creature which was ſo ſeaſonable after a Journey. It is unqueſtionable that the Thing in itſelf is innocent, juſt and lawful.

It is true, there were ſome Hereticks that condemned all Wine, as *Marcion*, and after him *Tatianus*. And * *Epiphanius* ſaith the ſame of the *Pepuziani*, who were alſo called *Encratitæ*, *i. e.* Sober and Abſtinent: For the former Hereticks having been mad and looſe, theſe reſolved to run quite counter to them, and therefore drank no Wine, nor eat any Fleſh. Becauſe of thoſe Words in *Prov.* xxiii. 32. *It biteth like a ſerpent, and ſtingeth like an adder*, theſe deluded People called all Wine the *Poyſon of the Old Serpent*, and the *Gall of Devils*, and laid aſide the Uſe of it altogether as a Thing moſt ſinful and flagitious. This was the wild Conceit and Practice of thoſe old Hereticks; but no wiſe and conſiderate Man ever entertained ſuch an Opinion, or denied himſelf that Liberty which Chriſtianity itſelf hath allowed him, or cenſures and condemns others for making uſe of it. The wiſe Man tells us that * *there is a time to laugh*, *i. e.* to be pleaſant and chearful, and to refreſh ourſelves with honeſt Mirth: And this Mirth may be cheriſhed by the lawful Uſe of God's good Creatures, and particularly that of *Wine*. For though it cannot be denied (it being alas too evident) that Men generally *abuſe* this Gift and Bleſſing, yet this Abuſing of it is no Argument why the Uſe of it ſhould be altogether taken away. *Plutarch* doth not unjuſtly cenſure *Lycurgus* for cauſing the Vines to be cut down, becauſe it ſeems he ſaw that Drunkenneſs was much in Faſhion among the *Lacedemonians*. It had been better, ſaith this Writer, to have dug Wells near the Vines; as much as to ſay, that worthy Lawgiver might have reſtrained the Exceſs by ordering them to mingle Water with their Wine. Or, he might have preſerved the Vines, but puniſhed the Drunkards. Wine is not to be wholly forbid becauſe ſome make themſelves drunk with it.

* *Hæreſ.* 47. *Baſil. m. ad Amphiloc.*

* *Eccl.* iii. 4.

As *Drinking*, ſo *Sobriety* may be abuſed. Men may effect thoſe Miſchiefs by their abſtaining from immoderate Drinking, which they could never be able to do if they drank extravagantly. *Cato* thought he aggravated *Julius Cæſar*'s Guilt by ſaying that he came *ſober* to overthrow the State: He deſtroyed the Commonwealth by his Drinking ſparingly. Here that Aphoriſm of *Hippocrates* may be applied, * Madneſs accompanied with Laughter is moſt Safe, but the ſerious Madneſs is moſt dangerous. This is certain that in ſome Caſes *Sobriety* is a bad Symptom. Some vicious Perſons are hugely ſober, and that makes them worſe. Generally the ſhrewdeſt Contrivers and Executors of Miſchief are thoſe who are not addicted to Imtemperance: And their very Sobriety renders them the more able to do Harm. And yet I cannot ſay that this Sort of Men are wholly free from *Drunkenneſs*; for it is poſſible they may be drunk even with their Sobriety, *i. e.* with the Conceit of it, they may be * intoxicated with Pride and Arrogance, or with Spight and Malice, or with a heady Confidence of Succeſs in their evil Enterprizes. *They may*, as † the Prophet ſpeaks, *ſtagger, but not with ſtrong drink, and be drunken, but not with wine.* And ſome that blame (and that juſtly) the wet Drunkenneſs are themſelves guilty of this dry one.

I ſpeak this to let you ſee that even Sobriety may be abuſed: It is no Wonder then that That is, which ſo often ſerves to Intemperance, I mean the drinking Wine. Now, it is an undeniable Truth that this is not unlawful in itſelf, but yet it is capable of being uſed either lawfully or unlawfully: Which you may imagine to be hinted to you in the double Acception of the * *Hebrew* and † *Greek* Words whereby this Drinking is expreſſed, for they are taken both in a good and a bad Senſe. So Wine may be drunk to good or bad Purpoſes, and accordingly is either lawful or not. It is here as it is in other Things; that which is good in itſelf may by Abuſe become evil. *Fire* is an excellent Bleſſing, yet if you come too near it, it proves deſtructive. So Wine is a ſingular Benefit to Mankind; but if you take too large Quantities of it, it proves evil and fatal. It hath no Sting but what it receives from the Drinker. It was made to be an excellent Refreſhment and Reſtorative, but if ſuch great Portions of it be taken down as will make you ſick, and create Infirmities and Languiſhments, and adminiſter to Diſeaſes, then the innocent Uſe of Wine is perverted, and God the Giver is offended, and the Creature itſelf is become evil and miſchievous in the Event. Wine was beſtowed on Man *to make his Heart glad* (as you have heard): But if it be ſo abuſed as *to take away the Heart* (as the Prophet *Hoſea* tells us it doth by *Exceſs*;) then it is attended with the Curſe of Heaven, and is the Occaſion of innumerable Evils and Miſchiefs.

You ſee then what it is that I aim at, I intend not in this following Diſcourſe to perſuade you to turn *Nazarites*, to be under a Vow never to drink Wine or ſtrong Drink: I have ſhewn you that no ſuch Thing is required of us. But this it is which is required of us (and it is very reaſonable certainly) that we abuſe not this excellent Creature which God hath vouchſafed to us for our Uſe. It was the Direction of ſome Philoſophers whom *Philo* quotes, that * the Uſe of Wine muſt be with Caution, it muſt not be taken in too great a Quantity, or too frequently, but after a decent Manner, and in due Seaſon. Or, if this be ſomewhat indulgently ſpoken, as *Philo* thinks, I cannot expreſs my Meaning in fewer and more comprehenſive Words than thoſe of St. *Chryſoſtom*, ‡ Wine is not evil, but Immoderation or Intemperance is that which is evil and wicked. It is not Wine, but the ſinful Exceſs of it that makes Drunkenneſs. And this is the Vice forbidden in the Text, of which I am now to treat.

I might firſt inſert This, that *Wine* is a general Word to expreſs *all ſtrong Drink*, but this of *Wine* is particularly mentioned here, becauſe it was Part of the Liquor of that Country, and grew in that Place. Therefore do not excuſe yourſelves and think to guard yourſelves from the Text by ſaying, Ye are never

* Αἱ παραφροσύναι, αἱ μὲν μετὰ γέλωτος γινόμεναι ἀσφαλέστεραι· αἱ δὲ μετὰ σπουδῆς, ἐπισφαλέστεραι.

* *Multi inebriantur vino ſuperbiæ.* Prov. Judaic.

† *Iſai.* xxix. 9.

* *Shacar* } *largiter bibere:*
† Μεθύειν } *nimis bibere.*

* ἡ τοῦ οἴνου ἀπόλαυσίς τε καὶ χρῆσις δεῖται πολλῆς ἐπιμελείας. οὔτε ἄδην, οὔτε ἀεὶ, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν κόσμῳ καὶ καιρῷ προσήκοντι. *De Plantat. Noe.*

‡ Οὐ γὰρ ὁ οἶνος φαῦλον ἀλλ᾽ ἡ ἀμετρία πονηρόν. Οὐχ ὁ οἶνος ποιεῖ τὴν μέθην, ἀλλ᾽ ἡ ἀσωτία. *Homil.* 1. *ad pop. Antioch.*

never drunk with Wine, but with taking too large a Quantity of ſome lower Sort of Liquor. Know this, that Drunkenneſs may be committed in any Sort of ſtrong Drink. Then Men abuſe themſelves and theſe Bleſſings when they drink to *Intemperance*, which is to be judged firſt by the *eager Deſire* which they have of exceſſive Drinking, by their inordinate *Delight* in high and ſtrong Liquors: Next, by their *actual Immoderation* in Drinking, by their * *following ſtrong drink, and continuing at it 'till they be inflamed*, as the Prophet ſpeaks. This is an abſolute and direct Breach of the Precept in the Text, and of that excellent Inſtruction which *Tobit* gave his Son, * *Drink not wine to make thee drunk.*

* *Iſai.* v. 11.

* *Tob.* iv. 15.

Yea, although ſome Mens Conſtitutions be ſuch that they can tarry at the Wine, and take down immoderate Draughts, and yet loſe not the Uſe of their Reaſons and Senſes, but ſeem ſtill to remain ſober and compoſed, yet theſe Perſons cannot clear themſelves of the Sin of Drunkenneſs: For a *Woe* is denounced againſt *thoſe that are mighty to drink wine, and men of ſtrength to mingle ſtrong drink*, Iſai. v. 22. *Drunkenneſs* is uſually taken for the Loſs of Reaſon following immoderate Drinking: But you are to be informed that That is not ſo much the *Sin* of Drunkenneſs as the *Effect* and *Puniſhment* of it. To be intoxicated is not the Sin of Drunkenneſs, for a Man may have his Brains and Body affected like a drunken Man (as ſome Medicines, which may be lawfully taken, will cauſe it); yet this is not properly, at leaſt in the Theological Meaning, Drunkenneſs.

That which makes this Sin is, firſt, the not Reſtraining of our extravagant Deſire and Appetite, which I mentioned before, and, ſecondly, the actual Gratifying and Satisfying of our Deſires. It is not Intoxication and being deprived of Reaſon which always give Denomination to Drunkenneſs: But thoſe are deſervedly reckoned to he addicted to this Vice, who, though they are not diſtempered in their Heads, but ſeem to be as ſober as they were at firſt, yet indulge themſelves in ſuch Drinking as laviſhly conſumes the good Creature of God and their Time together, both which were given them to better Purpoſes; in ſhort, there are Degrees of this vile Sin: But all of them are to be avoided and hated, more eſpecially that high Degree of Drunkenneſs, whereby Men run into the moſt foul Miſcarriages and Diſorders, and pull upon their Heads the moſt deplorable Evils and Miſchiefs.

Which brings me to the next Thing obſervable, *viz.* the *Reaſon* of the Apoſtolical Dehortation, expreſſed in thoſe Words, *wherein is Exceſs*: As much as to ſay, Be not drunk with Wine, *becauſe* there is a ſtrange *Exceſs* attends it. This is the genuine Meaning of this Clauſe of the Text. Now, in Drunkenneſs there is Exceſs not only *formally*, but *cauſally* (to ſpeak in the Language of the *Schools*): It is both Exceſs in itſelf, and the Cauſe and Origine of many other Exceſſes. The † *Greek* Word which we render *Exceſs* is very full and comprehenſive, and cannot well be expreſſed by one Word. Ἀσωτία is made up of ſeveral Vices, *Exceſs* is all manner of Debauchery. It ſignifies all Kind of Profuſeneſs, Diſorder, Diſſoluteneſs, Lewdneſs, Riot. It is a total Defection from Vertue, ſo that they that labour under it ſeem not to be in a Capacity to be *ſaved*, as the Word imports. Ἄσωτος is a profuſe, prodigal, riotous Perſon, he that *ſaveth nothing, and cannot be ſaved himſelf*, a Caſt-way, an undone loſt Man, given to all Wickedneſs, and of whom is no Hope. This is the *Exceſs* which is too frequently in *Wine*, *i. e.* in the immoderate Drinking of it. Wherefore as heretofore I ſhewd the evil Fruits of *Surfeiting* and *Gluttony*, or immoderate Eating, ſo now I will ſhew you the evil Conſequences of the *other* Sort of Intemperance, *vix. Drunkenneſs* (though I did not wholly exclude theſe then). And indeed becauſe Intemperance in Drinking is more taken Notice of and obſerved, and on that Account becomes more ſcandalous than that of Eating, and becauſe it hath more woful and diſmal Conſequences than This, therefore it is neceſſary to ſay ſomething *particularly* and *diſtinctly* of the Evils which accompany this Sort of Vice. Drunkenneſs injures Mens *Bodies*, *Eſtates*, and *Reputations*; it makes Men both *ſpeak* and *act* fooliſhly: It is the Parent of *Violence*, *Rage* and *Slaughter*: It is the Nurſe of *Wantonneſs* and *Lewdneſs*; It corrupts Mens *Minds*, and damns their *Souls*. The Brief is, that there are the ſame Arguments againſt Drunkenneſs that there were againſt Gluttony, and ſome *other peculiar* ones beſides.

† *ἀσωτία.*

1. The firſt Evil of Drunkenneſs is that Injury which is done to the *Body* by it. And if I ſhould inſiſt on no other but this, there would be a ſufficient Diſcovery of the miſchievous Nature of extravagant Drinking. This vile Sin injures every Part of the Body of Men. I will only inſtance in ſome of them. The groſs Fumes which climb up to the *Head* by exceſſive Drinking, make the Man complain the next Day of great Uneaſineſs, and ſometimes of Pains and Aking there. The *Brain* being overburdened with indigeſted Vapours generates Rheums and Catarrhs, which fall down like heavy Cataracts on the Lungs and other Parts of the Body. The exhaled Wine often appears in the *Countenance*, There are ſeen the afrighting Marks of the Man's over-heated Blood, as if all his Drinking-Veſſels had been Cupping-Glaſſes, and had raiſed Bliſters in his Face. By other Sins God's Image is ſpoiled and defaced, but by Drunkenneſs a Man's own Image is deformed. His *Face* carries the Enſigns of his Intemperance, and his inflamed *Eyes* teſtify the hot Services he hath been at. Sometimes the trembling *Hands* confeſs the Guilt of his Debauchery: For when the Brain comes to be obſtructed with the Fumes of Intoxication, it is no Wonder that the *Nerves* (which are derived from that Source) ceaſe to do their Office. And truly the ſhaking and unſteady Hand is a juſt Penalty for the Drunkards moving it ſo often to his Head, and it admoniſhes him that for the Future he ought not. The *Feet* as well as the Hands bear the Badge of Drunkenneſs; for this ſhackles their Legs, and makes them almoſt uſeleſs. The Wine lays them by the Heels, and doth that which the Officer ſhould do.

And this Unſteadineſs creeps from their Hands and Feet into the *other Parts* of their Bodies, you may ſee them *reel too and fro, and ſtagger, like drunken men* indeed. A *Vine* is one of the weakeſt Trees, it muſt be propt up, or be upheld by Walls, it cannot ſtand of itſelf: A true Emblem of the Man who partakes too freely of the Fruit of the Vine. He is weake and feeble, his Legs cannot ſupport him: He is a *Child*, he cannot go alone: Rather, he is a *Brute*, he cannot walk upright. Wine was made to repair and refreſh the *Spirits* of Men, but Drunkards exhauſt *theirs* by their immoderate Draughts. They ſuck in ſo much of the *Juyce* of the Grape that they leave their Bodies for a Time without *any*, parched and dried up. Their *Stomachs* in a more notorious Manner witneſs the diſmal Effects of the Exceſs of Wine, and by loathſome Evomitions make known (tho' againſt their Will) their filthy Debauchery. In ſhort, when Wine or any other ſtrong Drink is taken in too large a Quantity, the native Heat and Moiſture are both endangered and diminiſhed, the Concoctions of the ſeveral Juices are corrupted, eſpecially the generous Temper of the Blood is depraved, and thereupon whole Troops of Diſeaſes invade the Body, as Catarrhs, Apoplexies, Feavers, Palſies. Theſe are frequently the more peculiar Product and proper Brood of Drunkenneſs.

Though I know ſome have been ſo vain as to preſcribe the Practice of this Vice for the *preſerving of Health*; as *Avicenna* and other *Arabian* Phyſicians, not to add one of our own. But this is to be looked upon as a peculiar Conceit, eſpecially in thoſe *Mahometan* Phyſicians, who being forbid to drink Wine, perhaps found out this Way to gratify themſelves and their Patients ſometimes. But all Men of unprejudiced Reaſon condemn Drunkenneſs not only as a Sin, but as a Great Miſchief, *viz.* as it is prejudicial to the bodily Health. And though ſome ſay they find it not ſo, that is, at preſent; yet if you aſk their Opinion of this Matter ſome Years afterwards, it is likely they will be ſo civil to Truth as to acknowledge that by their immoderate Cups, and the Diſorders which accompanied them, they laid the Foundation of thoſe Maladies which they then groan under: For ſome robuſt Conſtitutions feel not the Shock of Intemperance till a conſiderable Time after: The Effects of their Debauchery break not forth 'till their declining Age, and then they * *poſſeſs the Iniquities of their Youth*, *i. e.* of their Intemperance which they indulged themſelves in whilſt they were young, then they reap the Fruits of their juvenile Folly, then thoſe Diſtempers which were before bred and nouriſhed diſplay themſelves, † *their Bones are full of the Sin of their Youth.* Who ſees not that even Mens whole Lives bemoan the Miſchiefs of Intemperate Drinking? Their Diſeaſes and Maladies are the plain Effects of their Exceſs.

* *Job.* xiii. 26.

† *Job* xx. 11.

Exceſs. This cauſes them to crave the Aid of the Phyſician; and their delightful Draughts make Way for unpleaſant Potions. They ſubſcribe to this Truth, that Intemperance is injurious to the Body, it renders it unſound and unhealthful, it fills it with Pains and Diſeaſes. Whilſt they drink others Healths, they ſhamefully impair their own. That Wine which was given to cure the Infirm and Sickly, procures Sickneſſes and Infirmities, and at laſt an immature Death. One would think there need no more to be ſaid to repreſent the Miſchief of this Vice. But I proceed,

2. This is a Vice which injures not only the Bodies but the *Eſtates* of Men. A Drunkard is a Spend-thrift: The extravagant Drinker is profuſe and laviſh. This is truly ἀσωτία (the Word in the Text) a vain and ſottiſh Prodigality, a Waſting his Revenues by Profuſeneſs in Wine. Therefore *Solomon* ſaith truly, *He that loveth wine ſhall not be rich*, Prov. xxi. 17. This muſt needs be, becauſe this Sin is not like that of *Swearing*, and ſome other Vices, which coſt a Man not a Farthing, eſpecially when they go unpuniſhed; but this that I am ſpeaking of is a coſtly Vice, there is a continual Laying out of Money to maintain it. And likewiſe this beſotting Vice is prejudicial to Mens ſecular Intereſt, becauſe it partly hinders them from being employed in their Callings, whereby they might gain a Livelyhood, and increaſe what they have. Serious Cares are drowned in Wine, and Men are thereby rendered careleſs of their chief Concerns. Drunkenneſs generally makes them neglect Buſineſs, and will not ſuffer them to mind even their worldly Advantage and Profit. Beſides, this leads Men to other Vices which are very coſtly and expenſive. Drunkenneſs and Gaming are no unuſual Companions; and Whoredom is not wont to be abſent from both: Whoredom, I ſay, which brings many a Man to a *piece of bread*, as *Solomon* hath obſerved, *Prov.* vi. 26. A *ſmall Morſel* muſt be that Man's Portion who had been ſo laviſh before. This is *damnoſè bibere*, as *Horace* ſpeaks, to drink 'till a Man ſpends all he hath. There are daily Inſtances of this in the World, which are ſufficient Demonſtrations of the lamentable Conſequences of this Sin; And whole Houſes and Families bewail the Miſeries that attend it. And though there be many rich and wealthy Drunkards, who conſume not their Eſtates and the Wine together, yet theſe Men are beholding to the Greatneſs and Plentifulneſs of their Incomes, not to their own Acting, which would certainly drain any moderate Revenues, and reduce the Perſons to Need and Want, and ſometimes even to Beggary.

3. A ſottiſh Courſe of Drinking injures the *Name* and *Reputation*, no leſs than the Bodies and Eſtates of Men This is evident from what I have ſaid already; for when Men contract Diſeaſes, and diſable their Bodies, and alſo exhauſt their Eſtates and Incomes by their own wilful Default, they cannot but ſink in their Credit and Repute in the World. When they have drawn upon themſelves Sickneſs and Poverty, they are juſtly ſcorned, and their Names become vile and infamous: But if we conſider Drunkenneſs in its *own Nature*, and abſtracted from the Things beforementioned, it muſt needs appear to us vile and reproachful. I know the contrary Opinion prevails among ſome Perſons, and thoſe of the higheſt Quality. It is Gentleman-like to be a great Drinker, and to tarry long at the Wine: And thoſe are counted low and baſe who flinch from it; as if there were no generous Spirits which do not deſcend from the Blood of the Grape. But this is a very groſs Miſtake, and if we will ſpeak truly and properly, it is not *gentile* and *creditable* to drink immoderately, it is not like a Man of *Worth* and *Breeding*. If theſe Words were ſaid in an other Place, I know they might be followed with a Challenge. But I hope the Pulpit is its own Protection: We may ſafely tell you that that Man who debaucheth himſelf and others with exceſſive Drinkings is not a *brave* and *generous* Perſon; he doth not act worthily and gallantly, but, on the contrary, his Doings are ſordid and baſe, and he ought to be aſhamed of them. It is no Credit to be overcharged with Liquors, but rather it is a manifeſt Diſgrace and Reproach, for *Sin is a Reproach to any Perſon* or *People*, if you'l believe *Solomon*: And if you will not, I am ſure you will not believe me.

Noah (who was the firſt and original Sinner in this Kind that we read of) when he was drunk with Wine, became the Scorn and Obloquy of his Sons: *Lot* was mocked and ſcoffed at. And even at this Day we ſee drunken Men are hooted at and derided: Which ſuggeſts this to us that thoſe who practiſe the Vice, yet ſcorn it in others: And further it acquaints us, that it is a vile and diſgraceful Thing, for they find it reaſonable to explode it when they themſelves are not concerned: Therefore it follows that in itſelf it is baſe and ignominious. We read in *Plutarch* that the *Lacedemonians* uſed to make their *Slaves* drunk, that their Children might ſee by them what a brutiſh and unmanly Sin Drunkenneſs is. It ſeems they thought it a very reproachful Vice. Though it might look well enough in a *Slave*, the vileſt of Perſons, yet it was unworthy of thoſe that were free and ingenuous. And truly Drunkenneſs itſelf is *Slavery*, and none but *ſervile Perſons* will addict themſelves to it. He that gives himſelf up to intemperate Drinking, leads a ſlaviſh Life. If you obſerve the great Drudgery he goes through, you cannot but pronounce him a Vaſſal, a Bondman. Which ſeems to be hinted from what the Apoſtle ſaith, *Tit.* ii. 3. where the * *being enſlaved* (for ſo it is in the Original, though we render it *given) to much Wine* is forbidden. There are *Slaves* to Wine and ſtrong Drink: Yea, they willingly continue ſo, and are contented with their Thraldom, which is the moſt reproachful Thing that can be ſaid of them.

4. The * *Intemperance of the Tongue* uſually attends that of the Brain. Drunkenneſs firſt ſets the Tongue a going, and then ſoon makes it run too faſt. It was rightly ſaid by *Plutarch*, † Drunkenneſs is Talkative and Prating. The Ancients had a Senſe of this, and accordingly pictured *Bacchus* like a *Boy*, to acquaint us that a Drunkard is unmanly, as in all other Things ſo in his Words, he talks idlely and fooliſhly, and babbles like an untutoured Child. The retentive Vertue of the Tongue is loſt by Wine, and then no Secrecy can be kept. * When Wine is ſwallowed down, all Secrets are diſgorged, as the *Hebrew* Maſters ſay well. Which makes a Drunkard an unfit Perſon to be truſted. He cannot be a Friend or Confident, for all runs over with the Liquor. As *Noah* diſcovered his Nakedneſs when he was drunk, ſo theſe Perſons hide nothing in that Condition. Exceſs of Wine removes Diſſimulation, and they ſpeak what they never intended to utter, even to the diſcovering the Nakedneſs of their Souls. And when that unruly Member is once let looſe, there is no Guard upon it. That is true in an *other* Senſe than the *Jewiſh* Doctors meant it, * *When Wine hath a Voice, it is a bad Sign*, then Drinking becomes evil when it produceth exceſſive Noiſe and Clamour. And this is the common Effect of too much Drink, Men grow lowd, and are heard to brawl, they conteſt and quarrel, they ſpeak ill of whom they pleaſe, they backbite and aſperſe their beſt Friends. Obſerve that *Falſe Accuſers* or *Make-bates* (as it is in the Margin) are joyned with thoſe that *are given to much wine*, *Tit.* ii. 3. Railing and Scurrility are the proper Dialect of Drunkenneſs, as the wiſe Man obſerved in that Aphoriſm, *wine is a mocker*, Prov. xx. 21. And moreover, the heated Liquor boils up at Mens Mouths in *filthy Communication*, and breaks out at their Lips in Obſcenity and Ribaldry: For they that have *acted* ſhameful Things, will *ſpeak* them, eſpecially when the ſame Ferment Returns. I could add here, That as immoderate Drinking ſets the Tongue a going, ſo ſometimes it makes it ſtand ſtill, and ſeems even to tie it up. By the Exceſs of Moiſture the Speech is drowned, and the Drunkard becomes a Mute. Now he hath one Property more of a Beaſt than he had before, *viz.* that he cannot ſpeak. And this truly is not to be lamented, for unleſs he can govern his Tongue better, it is far more eligible that he ſhould be ſilent for ever.

5. *Wrath* and *Fury*, *Slaughter* and *Bloodſhed* are the curſed Fruits of Drunkenneſs. *Strong drink is raging*, ſaith *Solomon*, Prov. xx. 21. Their Wine is mixed with Gall, it turns into Bitterneſs and Choler, it adminiſters to Anger and Revenge. It was a poetical Fiction that *Bacchus* was brought forth in *Flames* and *Thunder*: But the daily Meetings and Clubs of the Debauched tell us the Meaning of it, for there you may behold them very hot and fiery, and making it their Work as 'twere to inflame and inrage one an other. For this Reaſon likewiſe the Ancients repreſented their God of Wine ſitting upon a

* δεδουλωμένας πολλῷ οἴνῳ.

* Τὸ περὶ τοὺς λόγους ἀκρατές. *Plut.* Ἀκρασία τοῦ λόγου. *Theophraſt.*

† Ἡ δὲ μέθη, λάλον καὶ πολύφωνον.

* *Ingrediente vino, egreditur Secretum.* Sanhedrin.

* *Vox malum ſignum eſt vino.*

Tyger, namely, to ſhew how outragious and fierce he is, to let us know that He and *Mars* are not unacquainted. *Drunkenneſs* and *Blows* are uſual Companions, and therefore * *not to be given to wine*, and *to be no ſtriker* are joyned together by the Apoſtle. Drunken Men rudely ſcuffle with one an other, but without Cauſe: They contend and fight, but they know not for what, and you ſhall ſee them with great Violence make uſe of their Hands even when their Feet have forgot their Office. Yea, the Hands of Drunkards, as unſteady as they are, can find the Way to their Weapons. How often are Wounds and Bloodſhed the Effects of Intemperance? How often is Drunkenneſs the Cauſe of Murder? How frequently are Wine and Blood mingled together? It was when *Herod* was warmed with Wine that he ſent and ſtruck off *John Baptiſt*'s Head. When *Alexander the Great* was overheated with Drinking, he ran *Clytus* through with his Spear, *Clytus* who was one of the chief Commanders of his Army, yea *Clytus* who was his intimate Friend and Comrade, yea that *Clytus* who had ſaved *Alexander*'s Life in his Expedition againſt the *Perſians*, where he bravely put by the Blow of the Battle-axe, which was lifted up againſt him by one of *Darius*'s Captains. But this was done like a right Drunkard, who is not ſo nice as to know any Difference between Friends and Enemies.

* 1 *Tim.* iii. 3.

And there are Examples not only of thoſe who ſhewed themſelves bloody in their Cups, but of ſuch likewiſe whoſe Blood was the Forfeiture of their Drunkenneſs. The Lords of the *Philiſtines* were cruſhed to Death when their Hearts were merry with Wine, and *Belſhazzar* was ſlain and *Babylon* taken when both King and People were buried in Drink and Sottiſhneſs. To which might be added the bloody Exit of that King of *Iſrael* who was cut off and murdered at the Beginning of his Reign, *as he was drinking himſelf drunk* in the Houſe of one of his Courtiers, 1 *Kings* xvi. 9, 10. And the Church Hiſtory of the *Jews* relates that *Holofernes*, when he was filled with Wine, felt the fatal Stroke of *Judith*'s Hand. And there are innumerable other Inſtances of the Danger and Miſchiefs which attend this Sin, ſo that drunken Men have little Cauſe to comfort themſelves with what is proverbially ſaid, that *they ſeldom take Harm.* The worſt of Evils, the greateſt of Harms befall theſe Perſons, if Slaughter and violent Death be ſuch. The Blood of the Grape and their own are oftentimes ſhed together.

6. *Luſt* and *Lewdneſs*, *Whoredom* and *Fornication* are the frequent Attendants of extraordinary Drinking. This is included in the ἀσωτία, the *Exceſs* which my Text mentions to be in *Wine*. To *live riotouſly*, * which in the Original is expreſſed by the Word in the Text, is to *live with Harlots*, as is evident from comparing the 13*th* Verſe with the 30*th*. To this Sin of *Uncleanneſs* our learned Annotator thinks the Apoſtle particularly refers in the Text, and he is of the Opinion that this Dehortation hath Reſpect to the intemperate and diſſolute Practices of the *Heathens* in their *Bacchanalia*, who then uſed to drink exceſſively, and to excite and provoke themſelves by that to yet lewder Actions, which were uſual with them in the great Solemnities and Services of their Gods. Wine inflamed them to Luſt and the greateſt Acts of Carnality. The Apoſtle here diſſuades the *Epheſian* Converts from continuing in thoſe heathen Debaucheries. So that *Peter* dehorts the Chriſtian *Jews* from imitating the *Heathens* in this Particular, 1 *Pet.* iv. 3, 4. where you'll find that *Laſciviouſneſs*, and *Luſts* and *Exceſs of Wine*, and *Exceſs of Riot* are mentioned together, as the Companions of their idolatrous Feaſts. When they were heated with Wine, they were at the ſame Time inflamed with Luſt, and ſet on fire of Hell. Of which there are daily Inſtances every where, and therefore they ought to be Warnings againſt the Vice I am ſpeaking of. *Lot* was drunk, and then he committed Inceſt, he that eſcaped the Burning of *Sodom* was ſcorched with the Flames of unnatural Luſt: Though I know * ſome of the Fathers endeavour to excuſe both *Lot* and his Daughters, telling us that what he did was not the Product of Luſt, but done wholly with a Deſign to propagate his Race to Poſterity. But it is evident from other unqueſtionable Inſtances, and from the Nature of the Thing itſelf, that Drunkenneſs leads to Uncleanneſs, and all Manner of Laſciviouſneſs. This *Solomon* witneſſeth who had been a great Experimenter in Vice, he reckons this as one Effect of Drunkenneſs, *thine eyes ſhall behold ſtrange women, i. e.* thou ſhalt be ſtirred up with a great Deſire to ſee, and to have the Converſation of lewd Women, *Prov.* xxiii. 33. If thou *lookeſt upon the*

* *Luke* xv. 13.

* *Origen, Chryſoſtom, Theodoret, Ambroſe.*

the wine to deſire it in Exceſs (which was forbidden in *v.* 31.) thou wilt alſo *look upon a woman* to luſt after her. I may here apply that in *Mat.* xii. 43. [*The unclean ſpirit* walketh through *dry places*, ſeeking Reſt and findeth none]. He flies from the Sober and Temperate as faſt as they do from him: But in the Places over-moiſtened with exceſſive Drinking, this *unclean Spirit* is invited as a Gueſt, and there he meets with the Welcomes he wiſhed for, and therefore there he finds *Reſt*, and takes up his Abode. *Whoredom*, and *Wine*, and *new Wine* are not unfitly coupled together by the Prophet *Hoſea*, *chap.* iv. *v.* 11. and are ſaid there to have the ſame Effects. To this anſwers that *Talmudick* Saying, * Where there is Wine there is Laſciviouſneſs and Luſt. This was intimated by the Ancients who pictured *Bacchus* with a Woman's Face, to tell us that Drunkenneſs is generally attended with Effeminacy and Lewdneſs, which is Part of that ἀσωτία that *Exceſs* which the Text ſpeaks of.

7thly and *Laſtly*, Among the direful Effects and Conſequences of extravagant Drinking this muſt not be omitted, That the Soul and all its Faculties are corrupted and debauched by it. Falſe Notions are drunk in with the Wine: Undue and unbecoming Apprehenſions are entertained. The Poets feign that *Midas* asked of *Bacchus*, his Gueſt, that all he touched might be turned into *Gold*. The Moral of this is no Fable, but a known Truth. *Bacchus* tranſmutes all into Gold. Drunkenneſs makes Men think themſelves *rich* though they be poor, and *powerful* though they be weak: Whereupon * they ſtrut and look big, and ſpeak and act as if they were Perſons of great Wealth and Power. This is the Reſult of the *wrong Apprehenſions* they imbibe with the Wine: For this dulls and ſtifles the Underſtanding, this weakens the Wit and Judgement, and impairs the Memory, ſo that they forget who they are. It doth not only for a Time (as we ſee it often happens) deprive a Man of that which is the eſſential Character of him, his Reaſon, but in many Perſons we may obſerve, that a Courſe of Drunkenneſs clouds and confounds their Reaſon continually. One would think the Lees of the Wine were ſettled in their Brains, and that thoſe Dreggs continued there always; for they do all Things inconſiderately and unadviſedly, they have no Command of their Minds, they do not act like Men of Reaſon and Judgement. So that *Solomon*'s Words are true even in this Senſe, *Whoſoever is deceived by wine, is not wiſe*, Prov. xx. 1. Drunkenneſs and Wiſdom are Strangers to one another, for Wiſdom lodges in a calm and ſedate Mind, but ſuch is not that of the Drunkard. To this Purpoſe the *Jews* have this proverbial Saying, He that is able to drink immoderately, and not hurt his Mind, that Man hath the Brains of the whole *Sanhedrim*. Their Meaning is, that there is no greater Diſturber of the Mind than intemperate Draughts of Wine. And therefore that which *Strabo* mentions concerning the *Perſians* is very ſtrange, * They conſult, ſaith he, about the greateſt and weightieſt Things when they are in Wine, and think that what they then decree is more firm and authentick than what they determine when they are ſober. Drunkenneſs ſurely is a very bad Qualification in a *Councellour*, for it deprives a Man of the Conſiſtency of his Thoughts, and if it be much indulged, inclines Men either to Infatuation or Madneſs. Such ſometimes is the Property of Wine immoderately taken that it brings a Kind of Frenzy with it; Drunkenneſs is * a voluntary Madneſs, as one of the Ancients rightly called it. A drunken Man and a mad Man are oftentimes the ſame, only with this Difference, that the Madneſs of the one is ſhorter than that of the other. If you obſerve the Tavern-Bedlam, he acts all the Humours and Geſtures of the other Sort of Franticks. He is ridiculous and apiſh, and ſaith and doth Things as wildly. In all of them he is unruly, diſorderly and ungovernable: From whence you may conclude that he is under an Alienation of Mind, and is not in his Wits. Wherefore *Heraclitus*, the wet Philoſopher (whom I call ſo, not becauſe of his *Drinking*, but of his *Weeping*; not for the Wine he drank, but for the Tears he ſhed) his Judgement and Sentence was that that Mind is the beſt which the abundant Moiſture of Wine had not overflowed, and thereby dulled and diſabled.

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* כָּל שֶׁיֵּשׁ בּוֹ יַיִן בּוֹ עֶרְוָה

* —— *tunc pauper cornua ſumit.* Ovid.

* Ἐν οἴνῳ τὰ μέγιστα βουλεύοντας ϗ βεβαιότερα τῶν ἐν νήψει τιθέντας. *Geogr.* lib. 15.

* Αὐθαίρετος μανία. *Iſidor. Pel. Epiſt.* lib. 1.

What could have been ſaid more emphatically than that of the Prophet *Hoſea, chap.* iv. *v.* 11. *Wine and new wine take away the heart.* The intellectual Part of Man is depraved by Intemperance, his Reaſon and Judgement are confounded. But that is not all; thoſe choice Faculties of his *Will* and *Affections* (here called *the Heart*) are miſerably perverted and abuſed by the ſame Courſe of Living. This ſtifles and choaks all Deſire and Love of Goodneſs that hath been bred in them at any Time; and in the Place thereof it places Irreligion and Prophaneneſs, Hardneſs of Heart, and Contempt of God's Word and Works. *Iſaiah* teſtifies of the voluptuous *Jews*, that when not only the *tabret* and *pipe* but *wine was in their feaſts, they regarded not the work of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands*, (Iſai. v. 12.) they took no Notice of God's Providence, they minded not what he did in the World. Wine, which is a *Mocker*, makes Men ſcoff at Religion. You may obſerve that they are very forward to ſhew their Wit (as they are pleaſed to call it) in ridiculing all that is ſacred, in deriding of Vertue, and in making themſelves Sport with the ſtricteſt Profeſſors of it. *David* was the *ſong of the drunkard*, Pſal. lx. 12. and it is likely his ſacred Songs and Pſalms were burleſqued by them in their looſer Catches. *Belſhazzar* was a ſignal Inſtance of that *Prophaneneſs*, which is the Companion of intemperate Cups: When too great an Incaleſcency of Wine had overpowered him, he called for the Veſſels of the Temple, that he and his Princes, his Wives and his Concubines might quaff in them; as if it were not enough that thoſe Veſſels had been ſacrilegiouſly taken out of the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, but they muſt alſo be polluted and prophaned by their Debauchery. But this is the Fruit of unmeaſurable Drinking: It makes Men fly at God himſelf, and affront Religion, and defy the moſt ſacred Things. It is no Wonder then that atheiſtical Talk, Blaſphemy, horrid Oaths and Execrations are the uſual Retinue of this Vice.

Thus the *Soul* is debauched by Drink as well as the *Body*. And this I have added as the *laſt*, but the *worſt* Effect, of that abominable *Exceſs* which is in Wine. And from all that hath been ſuggeſted I think it doth abundantly appear that Drunkenneſs is a Sin of a high Nature, yea, it is not one ſingle Sin, but a complicated Crime, a complex Vice: * Much Wine is the Cauſe of much Offending. Drunkenneſs ſets the Door open for all Folly and Immorality to enter in. At one Time or other it is the Cauſe of moſt of the Miſcarriages in the World. Yea, when the Devil enters into theſe *Swine*, he drives them furiouſly, he runs them down headlong into the Deep, into an Abyſs of Miſery and utter Deſtruction: And ſo all Sorts of *Dangers*, as well as *Vices* go along with this helliſh Sin. Drunkenneſs is not only an Offence againſt God, but a Puniſhment to the Perſons who are guilty of it. Even whilſt they ſeem to enjoy a certain Pleaſure, they are uneaſy, and in very bad Circumſtances. They may be truly and properly ſaid (though not in the Senſe of the Parable) *to labour in the vineyard*, to *work hard at the wine*. No men take more Pains than they do. A Thraſher hath an eaſy Employment in Compariſon of ſome of them. Such a Sett of Healths muſt be taken off by them, though their Brains are unable to admit them, and their Stomachs recoyl at them. They muſt do themſelves *Harm*: That is Part of the Reward of Drunkenneſs. Therefore you'll find in ſeveral Authors [*Saucius*] *i. e. hurt* or *maimed*, † is as much as *ebrius*, that is, *drunken*: It is included in the Nature of Drunkenneſs that you muſt *do yourſelves a Miſchief*, that you muſt *hurt and wound* both your Bodies and Souls. That worthy Knight Sir *W. Rawleigh* attempts to ſhew (in his ‡ Inſtructions to his Son) *what Inconveniences happen to ſuch as delight in wine*. But I have endeavoured to ſhew you ſomething *more*, and to let you ſee that there are not only *Inconveniences* that happen to theſe Perſons, but that *real Damage and Injury, down-right Harm and Miſchief* befall them. In ſhort, you may take Notice that *Drunkenneſs* is a Term uſed by *Jeremiah* to ſignify a *general Calamity*, *Jer.* xiii. 12, 13. *Every bottle ſhall be filled with wine: Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of Jeruſalem with drunkenneſs*, *i. e.* the *Jews* ſhall all be *ruined* by the *Chaldeans*. And in *Jer.* xxv. 15. under the Type of a *cup of wine, and drinking it*, is repreſented *Deſtruction* and *Deſolation*. Let this ſuggeſt to us this grand

* Πολὺς γὰρ οἶνος πολλὰ ἁμαρτάνειν ποιεῖ. *Menand.*

† *See this proved by* Ramus *on* Mart. lib. 3. cap. 68.

‡ *chap.* 9.

grand Truth, that if this Vice be indulged in the Height of it, and Men continue in the conſtant Practice of it, it ſeldom or never fails to be their *Ruin* and *Overthrow*.

Are theſe Things ſo, then 1. We have Cauſe to mourn and lament at this Day, that the Number of thoſe who are addicted to this heinous Vice, whereof I have been ſpeaking, is ſo great every where. 2. Be exhorted to take great Care that you be not guilty of this Sin. 3. I will anſwer the Excuſes and Pleas which are made for this Vice. 4. I will help and aſſiſt you in the mortifying of this Sin, and in practiſing the contrary Vertue.

1. Lament the Increaſe of this notorious Sin amongſt us. The *Jews* are accuſed by the *Pagan* Writers to have *worſhipped Vines*: That was one Calumny among others which they underwent. But would not one imagine almoſt that *Vines are worſhiped* in Chriſtendom, that the Grape is deified, that Wine is adored? Hath not *Bacchus* many Worſhippers even among Chriſtians? How conſtantly is he ſacrificed to in all Places? How frequently do they fall down to him? Where is there a City or Town wherein Intemperance hath not gained Votaries? Where is their a Fair or Market in which we may not behold the deplorable Trophies of this Vice? Phyſicians ſpeak of * a Diſtemper in which the Perſon cannot indure the Sight of *Water*. There are a Sort of Men among us who labour under a *Like*, but *worſe Antipathy*, I mean thoſe who cannot brook the Sight or Taſte of any *ſmaller* and *weaker* Drinks than thoſe that will inflame and intoxicate them: Others are eſteemed as *Water* by them, and they fly from them as if they were *affrighted*. Neither is it any mean and indifferent Quantity of thoſe high Liquors that will content them. A moderate Doſe is but a *Gargariſm*: They think they do but waſh their Mouths when they take down an ordinary Portion of Drink. Repeated Draughts and full Bowls are their Delight. Theſe Men love to be ever drinking, as if their Mouths and Throats were made for nothing elſe.

* *Hydrophobia.*

What a ſtrange Age are we fallen into! There never was greater Exceſs than now, and it was never ſo highly applauded as it is by the Men of theſe Days. Great Drinkers are extolled, and you ſhall hear it ſaid in their Commendation that they are faithful Drinkers, they will not defraud themſelves or others of their Liquor: They are able to bear a vaſt Load of Wine, and to lay all the Company aſleep. This is the uſual Panegyrick that is beſtowed upon them. So that we ſee that Prediction of *Seneca* fulfilled, (though ſome think he ſpoke it at Random), ‡ The Time will come (ſaith he) when Drunkenneſs ſhall be in high Eſteem, and in ſome Mens Ethicks it ſhall paſs for a Cardinal Vertue. He meant it of our Age ſurely, wherein this Vice is in ſuch great Credit, and is grown faſhionable. Hence it is that this Sin is more daring and open-faced than it was heretofore. For the Apoſtle tells us that in his Days *thoſe that were drunk were drunk in the night*, they were aſhamed to expoſe themſelves to open View. ‡ He was counted one of great Impudence that appeared drunk at Noon-day. *Diodorus Siculus* tells us that the Feaſts of *Bacchus* were celebrated *by Night* only, becauſe (ſaith he) their Solemnities were ſo vile that they were aſhamed they ſhould ſee the Light. Here *Bacchus* was ſtiled νυκτέλιος, and his Sacrifices νυκτέλια, *i. e.* Night Sacrifices. But *now* the Solemnities of *Bacchus* are not deferred 'till Night, and they that are drunk are drunk *in the Day* as well as *in the Night*. They outface the Authority of the Magiſtrate, they come abroad with the viſible Tokens of their Intemperance, and they bluſh not when the Sun looks upon them at Noon-day. You read that at the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt* the *Jews* cried out againſt the Apoſtles that they *were full of new wine*: Whereupon St. *Peter* ſtood up and checked them for their abuſive Railery, and told them it was far from being credible that the Apoſtles were drunk at that Time of Day, it being * *but the third hour*, *i. e.* with us Nine of the Clock in the Morning. But the Drunkards of our Time do not keep any Hour: They are forward to ſerve that vile Luſt at any Time of the Day. Many of them watch at the Wine all Night, and then 'tis no Wonder that you find them drunk *before* the third Hour of the Day.

* *Habebitur aliquando ebrietati honor, & plurimum meri cepiſſe virtus erit.*

‡ *Quæ iſta hæc audacia eſt, te ſic interdiu ebrium incedere?* Plaut.

* *Acts* ii. 15.

Shall I add, that there are thoſe who abandoning Sobriety in *Themſelves*, will not ſuffer it in *others*. You ſhall ſee them bring up their Children to the contrary Vice, and they love to ſee an early Intemperance in them. I read that the old *Germans* tried their Childrens Legitimacy as ſoon as they were born, by throwing them into the River *Rhine*, and ſeeing whether they could ſwim. There are thoſe that bring up their Offspring to an other Liquor, and they count them not of the right Breed unleſs they take it down naturally, and bear up briskly with the full Stream of it: And afterwards as they increaſe in Years, they are made more perfect in Drinking. Let us ſeriouſly conſider how greatly the divine Majeſty is provoked by this Vice and the daily Growth of it, and how great a Scandal this brings upon Chriſtianity: Let us heartily bewail the notorious Spreading of this Sin, and with a juſt Abhorrence appear againſt it.

2dly then, Be *exhorted* you that are hitherto free from this Vice, to keep yourſelves ſo: And you that have been addicted to it, to abandon it for the Future. And here I will addreſs myſelf to all Degrees and Ranks of Perſons.

Firſt, *Great Men* and *Magiſtrates*, and ſuch as are in *Authority*, you are concerned to avoid this foul Crime. You may remember I mentioned before how the *Lacedemonians* had a Cuſtom to fox their *Slaves* ſometimes: But now *Maſters* as well as *Servants*, great ones as well as meaner Perſons indulge this Vice, which makes it the more heinous. If the Governour be a *Bibulus*, a *Drinking Conſul*, his Fault is the greater. In a Magiſtrate and publick Officer exceſſive Drinking is an unſufferable Crime. Drunkenneſs in a *Ruler* is a crying Sin, and an Offence of a very deep Dye. Obſerve the Prophet *Iſaiah*'s Words, *chap.* v. *v.* 22, 23. [Woe unto them that are *mighty* to drink Wine, and Men *of Strength* to mingle ſtrong Drink.] They have an *elegant Ambiguity* in them, which is not unuſual in the ſacred Stile. The Prophet rebukes thoſe who being able and ſtrong of Brain give themſelves to immoderate Drinking, eſpecially if they be *mighty* in Authority, and Men of Place and Dignity: For this Quality of Perſons ſeems to be ſtruck at here, becauſe you read in the next Verſe that [*they juſtify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteouſneſs of the righteous from him*]. This ſhews that it is ſpoken of *Magiſtrates*, and thoſe who are to *execute Juſtice and Judgement*: But *Intemperance* mars their Juſtice. When they are Men of a riotous and debauched Life they will never defend the Cauſe of the Righteous, but take away his Righteouſneſs from him: They will eaſily be induced to juſtify the Wicked for Reward, they'll pervert all Juſtice and Honeſty.

And I pray read *Lemuel*'s (*i. e. Solomon*'s) Leſſon of *Temperance* which was taught him by his Mother, *Prov.* xxxi. 4, 5. [It is not for *Kings*, O *Lemuel*, it is not for *Kings* to drink Wine, nor for *Princes*, ſtrong Drink; leaſt they drink, and forget the Law, and pervert the Judgment of the Afflicted]. As much as to ſay, Injuſtice and Oppreſſion accompany Drunkenneſs in a Ruler. A drunken Magiſtrate cannot hold the Scales of Juſtice even: He is not able to ſtrike with a ſteady Hand. He will not (as 'tis ſaid in the 8*th* and 9*th* Verſes of this Chapter) [*Open his mouth for the dumb in the cauſe of ſuch as are appointed to deſtruction. He will not open his mouth and judge righteouſly, and plead the cauſe of the poor and needy.*] Let thoſe who are Miniſters of Juſtice read theſe Words, and learn Sobriety and exact Temperance. They are to be Examples and Patterns to others, therefore on that Account more eſpecially they muſt ſhun all Exceſs and Riot. They are to puniſh Drunkenneſs in others: How then can they be guilty of it themſelves. If they will but ſeriouſly think of this, they will cheriſh Sobriety in their own Perſons, and teach others that Vertue by practiſing it, and by inflicting the Puniſhment which is due to the Breach of it.

As to this Latter, all wiſe Nations have taken Care about it: For they thought it an unpardonable Defect in Government to countenance Intemperance by Impunity. The *Athenians*, who were a People generally very ſober and ſparing in Meat and Drink, had this Law made againſt the *Aſoti*, * That the Areopagites, *i. e.* the Judges of *Athens*, muſt puniſh them. If we look back even to our Anceſtors in this Iſland, we ſhall find that intemperate Drinking was reputed a great Offence, and was not permitted to go unpuniſhed, witneſs the known Laws of King *Edgar* and others. And we are not ignorant that our Laws which have been lately made, juſtify, yea command Penalties and Forfeitures to be inflicted upon all thoſe who are found drunk. Theſe provide that the Poor of the Pariſh ſhall quench their Thirſt and allay their Hunger with the Price of their Drunkenneſs and Surfeiting: Or if this chargeable Forfeiture be not taken, there is a ſhameful Expoſing of ſuch Offenders, and thoſe feet are to be confined which wandered into Houſes of Drink, but were not able to come out without Reeling. But I will not preſume to inſtruct any in that Part of their Duty and Office which they *know* ſo well: I only wiſh they practiſed it accordingly.

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* Τοὺς Ἀρεοπαγίτας κολάζειν τοὺς ἀσώτους. *Athenaeus.* lib. 4.

But that you may ſee I am impartial, and ſpare no Rank of Perſons, no not any of my own Function, I add in the next Place that *Miniſters* and thoſe who have the Charge of Souls muſt more eſpecially be careful that they be not blemiſhed with the Vice of Drunkenneſs. It is worth your obſerving what you meet with in *Lev.* x. 9. [*The Lord ſpake unto Aaron, ſaying, Do not drink wine nor ſtrong drink, thou nor thy ſons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, leaſt ye die: it ſhall be a ſtatute for ever throughout your Generations, and that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, and that ye may teach the children of Iſrael all the ſtatutes which the Lord hath ſpoken to them by Moſes.*] As much as to ſay, the *Prieſts* are not permitted to *drink immoderately:* They, of all Perſons muſt abſtain from Exceſs of Wine and all other intoxicating Liquors, for otherwiſe they will be diſabled for their ſacred Office, they will be unfit to offer Sacrifice; for they will not then know how to diſcern between that which is clean and that which is unclean (which was a neceſſary Requiſite in a Prieſt), and they will not be able to teach the People the Laws and Precepts which God had delivered to them. How could they teach others who broke the Commandments themſelves? *This* therefore was to paſs for a perpetual Ordinance and Statute that a Prieſt muſt not be given to Drunkenneſs. Therefore *that* is a *high Aggravation* of the *Jews* Wickedneſs which you read in *Iſai.* xxviii. 7. [The *Prieſt and the Prophet* have erred through ſtrong Drink, they are ſwallowed up of Wine.] He had ſaid before (in the *1ſt* Verſe of the Chapter) [Woe to the Drunkards of *Ephraim*] *i. e.* of *Iſrael.* That was a *general* Threatening againſt the Sin of Drunkenneſs: But *here* he is more *particular*; he ſtrikes at this Sin in the *Prieſts and Prophets. They* (ſaith he), as well as the *People*, have erred thro' ſtrong Drink, they are even ſwallowed up of Wine. The Wine doth as 'twere ſwallow and devour them, as they do it. And it is added as the diſmal Conſequence of *this*, that [*they err in Viſion, they ſtumble in Judgement*] *i. e.* neither Prophet nor Prieſt can diſcharge their Office aright, the one will deceive People with falſe Viſions; and the other will be miſtaken in interpreting the Judgements and Statutes of the Lord. It is *appoſitely* expreſſed here, they *ſtumble*; like *drunken Men* they cannot keep their Way, they are unable to walk ſteadily; they trip, they ſtagger, they miſerably fail and offend.

The *Gentiles* were ſenſible of *this* likewiſe. They apprehended that it was an unfit Thing for a Prieſt to be addicted to intemperate Drinking. This was a Rule amongſt them, ſaith *Plutarch*, * It is unlawful for a Prieſt to be overtaken with Wine.

But the *Evangelical and Chriſtian Laws* do more eſpecially and peremptorily forbid all Exceſs and Intemperance in thoſe who are Miniſters and Embaſſadours of Chriſt. In St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles to *Timothy* and *Titus* you may take Notice what ſingular Piety, Holineſs, and Purity he requires in thoſe that are initiated into the Miniſtry of the Goſpel. Particularly in the Character of a Biſhop he mentions this as one neceſſary Qualification, that *he be ſober, and that he be not given to wine*, 1 Tim. iii. 2, 3. And in the Character of a Deacon he inſerts this, That *he muſt not be given to much wine*, 1 Tim. iii. 8. Intemperate *Draughts* are unbecoming the Miniſters of Chriſt: Theſe muſt not deal in theſe Kind of *Drink-Offerings.* The drunken Companions *themſelves* look upon Drunkenneſs as a *Reproach* in a Clergyman. A drunken Divine is laughed at and reviled by the whole Club of Drinkers. A Prieſt of the *Church* and of *Bacchus* are a moſt abominable Compound. I will only add this one Word more, that that Miniſter can never awe his People with his Doctrine in the Pulpit who is over familiar with them in his Cups, and ſtays with them at the Wine.

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* 'Ου θεμιτὸν τῷ ἱερεῖ μεθύσκεσθαι. *Quæſt. Roman.*

Again, As Drunkenneſs is a heinous Sin in *Miniſters*, ſo likewiſe in all Perſons that make *Profeſſion of Religion* it is a greater Crime than in *others*. The Drunkenneſs of *Noah* and *Lot* (two Perſons of reputed Sanctity, and who had been favoured in an eminent Manner by God, and without Doubt gave ſignal Evidences of their Senſe of God's Favour to them, and of their Love to Vertue and Religion) the Drunkenneſs I ſay of theſe Men is recorded in holy Scripture effectually to teach us *Temperance* and *Sobriety*, and to ſhew us how ſcandalous and reproachful the *contrary* Vices are in thoſe that profeſs Religion, and have a Senſe of Goodneſs on their Hearts. The Bodies of good Men are the Temples of the *Holy Ghoſt*: Shall they at the ſame Time be made the Temples of *Bacchus*? Shall the Receptacles of the *Holy Spirit* be the Reſidence of the impure and helliſh One, who prompteth Men to Riot and Exceſs? Is it not very lamentable to obſerve ſometimes that thoſe who are converſant with holy Things, and partake of the Cup of the Lord, do likewiſe partake of the *Cup of Devils*? So I may juſtly call the Cup of Intemperance. It was a great and foul Diſorder which was taken Notice of in the *Gentile Religion*, *viz.* that they were uſually drunk after their Sacrifices: (which the * *Greek* Word for *being drunk* ſeems alſo to hint to us.) Their Cuſtom was to begin their great Feaſts with Sacrifices and Oblations, and after theſe they ſet themſelves to Drinking, and oftentimes the *Pagan* Worſhipper fell down before his Idol, not out of Devotion, but becauſe he was overburdened with Wine. Thus he and his God were well met, for the Worſhipper became as ſenſeleſs as the Stock he bowed to. Some think (as I have intimated already) that our Apoſtle in the Text refers to this *idolatrous Exceſs*, which it may be ſome of the *Epheſians* had been guilty of before their Converſion. Or perhaps he refers to the *Agapæ*, the *Love-Feaſts*, which uſually began with the Sacrifice of Praiſe and the holy Euchariſt, but ſometimes concluded with Exceſs and Riot. Wherefore he cautions the *Epheſians* againſt all ſuch Diſorder, *Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit.* Your Religion is ſpiritual, and ſo muſt your Mirth be: Therefore affect not the ſenſual Jollity of the Heathens, adopt not *Gentiliſm* into Chriſtianity, let not the old *Bacchanalia* be revived in the Chriſtian Feſtivals. Such a vile and ſcandalous Diſorder the Apoſtles took Notice of among the *Corinthians*, 1 *Cor.* xi. 21. *viz.* That ſome of them were drunk at the holy Communion. And that was a very horrid Miſdemeanor which eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory informs us ſome of the *primitive Chriſtians* were guilty of at the Celebration of the Memories of the deceaſed Martyrs: They ſometimes drank to ſuch Exceſs at thoſe ſolemn Commemorations, that they were found drunk over the Tombs of thoſe Martyrs: They mingled their prophane Liquor with thoſe ſacred Aſhes.

I might add in the next Place, that Drunkenneſs in *Women* is more offenſive and criminal than in *Men*: The Modeſty and Shamefacedneſs of that Sex forbid them to indulge this Sin, and thereby to expoſe themſelves to other Vices, and thoſe as great. This was the very Sentiment of the old *Romans*, who forbad the Uſe of Wine to their Women. Though in this they were too ſevere, yet they ſhewed by it how neceſſary it was that Sex ſhould be abſtemious and ſober. And the *Pagans* had their *Niphalia*, Solemnities ſacred to *Juno*, celebrated by ſober Matrons, to put that Sex in Mind what Goddeſs they worſhipped, and what Sobriety and Temperance were required of them. That *Women* muſt obſerve the Laws of Moderation and Sobriety with the greateſt Care and Circumſpection is evident from the Apoſtle's particular charging them *to be ſober, and not given to much wine*, 1 Tim. iii. 11. and again, *Tit.* ii. 3. On this Account that good Woman *Hannah* was ſollicitous to clear herſelf of that Imputation laid upon her by *Eli* the Prieſt, *viz.* that ſhe was *drunk*. You are miſtaken, ſaith ſhe, I am a Woman that fear God, and therefore abhor ſuch a Vice, *I have drunk neither wine nor ſtrong drink, but have poured out my ſoul before the Lord.* Therefore cenſure me not after that Manner, count not thy Handmaid a *daughter of Belial*. By which it appears that Drunkenneſs in that Sex is a Crime of a very heinous Nature, it renders the Party that

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* μεθύειν, qu. μετὰ τὸ θύειν.

is guilty a Daughter of *Belial*, a very profligate Sinner. Therefore they, above others, are ingaged to take an extraordinary Care to avoid this Vice at all Times.

Laſtly, Be exhorted *all of you*, of what Quality ſoever, to hate this loathſom Vice, and to abhor this notorious and ſcandalous Sin. Whoever thou art, know that Drunkenneſs doth not become thee, nay, be aſſured that it is a ſcandalous Blemiſh in thy Life; nay farther, be aſcertained of this, that it is ſuch a Crime as, if perſiſted in, will baniſh all Goodneſs from thy Breaſt, ſtifle all the Inclinations and Eſſays of Vertue, unfit thee for all Exerciſes of Religion, harden thee in thy other Sins, provoke the Vengeance of Heaven, and conſign thee to everlaſting Ruin.

3. Becauſe thoſe who are given to this Vice are wont to *plead for themſelves*, and to alledge ſome *Excuſes* for what they do, I will in the next Place briefly anſwer thoſe Pleas and Excuſes. And truly it is no Wonder that theſe Men offer to *plead* for their Drunkenneſs, when Drunkenneſs itſelf is an Excuſe with them for every Thing. Such a Man was drunk when he ſpoke thoſe ill Words, and was ſo abuſive in his Language: An other ſwore and curſed moſt bitterly, but it was in his Cups: A third killed ſuch a one, but poor Man he was not himſelf: And thus Drunkenneſs is become a general Apology. But there is no Reaſon it ſhould be ſo, for voluntary Drunkenneſs (and of ſuch we ſpeak) can no Ways excuſe the Miſcarriages that are conſequent upon it. For he that willeth the Drunkenneſs doth interpretatively will all that directly follows, and is cauſed by that Drunkenneſs. This is not to be denied, and therefore Drunkenneſs is a vain Excuſe. Accordingly in our Law (which is grounded on Reaſon) Drunkenneſs doth not priviledge and exempt any Man from Puniſhment, but 'tis a Maxim, That what Miſchief a Man doth in his Drink he muſt anſwer for when he is ſober, tho' it is much to be lamented that this Rule is little regarded of late. Yea, Drunkenneſs is ſo far from excuſing any Perſon, that it *aggravates* the Hurt he doth: For Drunkenneſs is a great Crime itſelf, and deſerves Puniſhment. But let us hear what the Men of Drink ſay for themſelves.

1. It is *Good Nature* and *Friendſhip*, they ſay, to ſit and drink, even 'till they can drink no more. This ſhews they are kind-hearted, and that they love their Friends exceeding well. But I anſwer 1. This is a ſtrange Sort of good Nature that proves ſo unkind and dangerous as this often doth, which I have made good in my former Diſcourſes. One would think *good Nature* (like *Charity*, to which it is ſo near of Kin) ſhould begin at Home, and be practiſed upon a Man's ownſelf. What! muſt we be kind and friendly to all but ourſelves? Or, is it Kindneſs to ourſelves to impair our bodily Health, to waſte our Eſtates, to blaſt our Names, to nouriſh Lewdneſs and Uncleanneſs in us, to foſter Rage and Madneſs, and to damn our Souls? Do you call this Good-Nature and Kind-heartedneſs? 2. This is a ſtrange Sort of good Nature, that not only hurts ourſelves but *others*: This is an unaccountable *Friendſhip* which harms thoſe we pretend to love moſt. From ſuch Friendſhip may we ever be delivered. If I cannot entertain my Friend, and make him welcome unleſs I do him a Miſchief, I deſire to continue ill-natured and unfriendly. 3. Let us get *other Friends* to bear us Company, and innocently to divert with. The Debauched are not the only Perſons in the World, there are many ſober and temperate Men whom we may converſe with. Let us exert our good Nature towards theſe, let us ſtrive to diſcharge all Offices of Love to them; and let us not be ſo ſottiſh as to imagine, that we ſhew ourſelves kind to them by doing them the greateſt Harm both in their Souls and Bodies.

2. They ſay that it is for *Company and good Fellowſhip's* ſake that they drink ſometimes to Immoderation. They tell us they are never drunken alone, but it is the Society and the Enjoying of one an other that tempts them to this Exceſs. *Alexander* the Great was a Drunkard of this Sort: He uſed long Compotations, but he ſpent a great Part of the Time in Diſcourſe, which was a Sign he loved the Company more than the Wine. But to reply 1. Though I grant that Proverb of the *Rabbins* *, You had as good be dead as have no Company, to be in ſome Meaſure true, yet certainly it muſt be underſtood of good Company, or at

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* *Aut Societas aut Mors.*

leaſt that which is not ſet upon Evil, for that which is ſo is dangerous, and leads to Death. Therefore the *Society* theſe Men ſpeak of can be no Plea for their intemperance, for ſuch without Doubt is pernicious and deadly. But *2dly*, It is plain that it is not *Society* it itſelf that theſe Men are deſirous of, but it is the *Drink* only which they plead for; for none are Good Company unleſs they will drink largely. Therefore whereas they ſay they drink for the ſake of the Company, it is falſe, for they keep Company only that they may drink. 3. They evidently baffle themſelves; for whereas they pretend they drink for Company and Converſe, yet theſe Men love to drink 'till they can have no Share in them. If they meet together for Converſe, why do they drink ſuch a Quantity as utterly ſpoils their Converſe? This ſhews that their Plea is falſe, and that notwithſtanding their Pretences they love to tipple, and that they care for the Wine more than the Company. *4thly*, I might add, that we muſt rather ſit alone, and be without Society than promote any Vice by it. Wherefore they do in vain plead *Company*, when they know it will betray them to Intemperance and Debauchery.

3. Others defend their immoderate Draughts after this Manner; We are Perſons *well bred*, we cannot be ſo *rude* and *unmannerly* as to refuſe our Glaſs when it comes to our Turn. The beſt Gentlemen will not be guilty in this Kind, but are very forward to take off their Cups. This therefore muſt be reckoned as a Sign of Breeding and Gentility. Though I have already ſaid that which may be ſufficient to anſwer this Plea, (for I ſhewed that Drunkenneſs is an Injury to Mens Reputation and Credit) yet I will add this further; 1. Theſe Men do very unadviſedly talk of *Breeding* and *Manners* in exceſſive Drinking. Is there not a great Deal of Good Manners and Gentility in the Words, Geſtures and Behaviour of Drunkards? Or rather, Is there any Thing more indecent, more rude, more booriſh and ill bred, yea, more beaſtly and ſavage: Yet theſe Men are for Good Manners. 2. If this be a good Excuſe, that they muſt not deny their Cups, becauſe it is not Good Manners, then I ſay, and can prove it, that 'tis Manners not to refuſe Poyſon if it be offered to them. 3. If it be gentile to drink immoderately, then how comes it to paſs that this is a Vice which the meaneſt and moſt ill bred People are addicted to? The pooreſt Labourers, yea, Beggars will be drunk. Indeed there never was ſuch an Exceſs of Drinking among the meaner Sort of People as there is now. Are theſe *Gentlemen* when they do ſo? The Alehouſe hath its Drunkards as well as the Taverns. Are theſe Latter the only genteel Drunkards? For Shame do not ſurmiſe ſuch Things, but aſſure yourſelves that Drunkenneſs is baſe, vile and ſordid where-ever it is, and in whatſoever Perſons it is indulged.

4. Some excuſe their Drunkenneſs by ſaying, *It is to put away Melancholy.* And to this Purpoſe they alledge the Opinion of *Plato*, who (as *Diogenes Laertius* reports) allowed of Drunkenneſs at Feſtivals. *Stobæus* tells us that *Zeno*, the Maſter of the *Stoicks*, was a great Drinker. And *Seneca* preſcribes * Drunkenneſs as a Remedy againſt Sorrow. We are of theſe *Philoſophers* Mind, ſay they; we hold it convenient to drink ſomewhat largely, that we may be rid of our Sorrows: We are in Debt, which is a great Clog to our Spirits, and we are under other unhappy Circumſtances, which make us dull and penſive: Therefore we find a Neceſſity of waſhing away our Sorrow and Diſcontent. But that this is a very fooliſh Excuſe may appear from theſe Conſiderations. 1. *Plato*, and *Zeno*, and *Seneca*, although they were great Dons in Morality, yet in this, as well as in ſeveral other Things, they were defective and faulty. And *Cato* might have been added to the Number, who was a frolick old Man, and would ſometines take too large a Cup. *Philo* takes Notice of theſe Men, and blames them for holding this Opinion, that a * good Man may be drunk without any Detriment to his Vertue. We are not to be guided by the looſer Sayings and Conceſſions of ſome Philoſophers, but by the ſtrict Rules of *Chriſtianity*, which forbids us to be drunk with Wine wherein is Exceſs. 2. If any Man be in Debt, (as was before alledged) his extravagant ſpending his Money in Drink is not the Way to free himſelf from that Calamity,

* *Nonnunquam & uſque ad ebrietatem veniri, non ut mergat nos, ſed ut deprimat curas.* De Tranquil. *cap. ult.*

* Μεθυσθήσεται ϗ ὁ ἀστεῖος, μηδὲν τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀποβαλών. *De Plantat. Noe.*

Calamity, but is rather one Means of increaſing and continuing it. 3. In whatever Calamity or Trouble it is that befalls you, you do very ill to add Sin to it; for ſuch is Drunkenneſs. Diſtreſs is no Vice, but Intemperance is, and this will bring more Miſery upon you. 4. In the Day of Trouble and Adverſity you ought to *conſider*, to reflect ſeriouſly on yourſelf and your Ways, but Intemperance will not admit of this, it ſhuts out all ſober Thoughts, and will not ſuffer you to examine your Actions. 5. Whereas you ſay you drink to baniſh ſorrowful and penſive Thoughts, I ask you whether you think it lawful to be mad, to avoid Melancholy? This is the Caſe oftentimes. 6. You would put away Melancholy by drinking immoderately, but you never conſider that this is the Parent of Melancholy. Who are more ſad and penſive the next Day than drinking Men? The ſoure Lees of Wine lodge in their Brains, and make them ſurly and moroſe. The fretting Tartar keeps them peeviſh 'till ſome freſh Liquor be poured upon them.

5. There are thoſe who defend their immoderate Drinking, eſpecially of Wine, by the Serviceableneſs of it, to *exalt their Parts, and to make them witty.* * *Bacchus* and *Minerva*'s Statues were of old erected on the ſame Altar. Wine gives Fancy and Invention, and therefore there can be † no Poet without it. The *Vine* and the *Laurel* (the Poets Enſign) muſt grow together, and the *Wine-Buſh* is the *Sign* of *Wit*. This is the Excuſe proper to the *ingenious* Drunkards, as they would be eſteemed. But 1. Let me tell them, if there be no Wit but what the Wine inſpires, then they muſt be always dull when they are not drunk, which I do not ſee how theſe great Wits can bear. 2. I grant that Wine actuates the Fancy; this generous Liquor, moderately taken, exalts the Imagination: But theſe Men who are given to Ebriety do not always meet with the moſt generous Wine; and beſides, they take it down without Moderation: Which is not the Way to help, but to deprave the Fancy. 3. The Wit that is the Product of Wine is not genuine, but forced, and that ſhews no Excellency and Worth in the Perſon, it is no real Matter of Commendation: Beſides that it is a ſhort Fit, and doth not continue. 4. Where Exceſs of Wine creates two or three pretty flaſhy Fancies, there are twice as many ſolid Notions loſt by it: For theſe are bred and nouriſhed by ſober and compoſed Thoughts, which are not the Fruit of Intemperance. 5. Sometimes Wine gives the Wit an Edge, but then it cuts with it, and doth Harm. 6. Immoderate Cups ſet the Blood on fire, and then all is in a Blaze for a Time; but when this is gone out, there remains nothing but a noiſom Snuff and Stench: The Fumes of the Wine become noiſom, the Brain is diſordered, the Reaſon clouded, the Mind diſturbed, and here are no Footſteps either of Wit or Wiſdom to be ſeen.

* *Heſiod. in Helic.*

† *Nulla placere diu, nec carmina vivere poſſunt*
Quæ ſcribuntur aquæ potoribus. Horat.

6. There is an other Excuſe made by ſome Men, which though it be not worth the anſwering, yet that I may remove all the Pretences of drinking Men, I will ſay ſomething to it. They are no common Drunkards, they ſay, and when they exceed in Drink, they do not, like others, ſpend their Money, but are drunk *gratis*. They cannot afford to indulge ſo coſtly a Vice, but they only take theſe Opportunities when they may have Wine at others Charges, as at a Pariſh-Meeting, or Goſſiping, or ſome Entertainment which their Friends beſtow upon them: At other Times they are very ſober. The only Reply which I make to theſe Perſons is this, that they do as good as ſay, they are not perpetual Drunkards becauſe they have no Money in their Pockets, or becauſe they are loth to part with it. Their Poverty or Penurriouſneſs make them ſober: But this is a Sobriety which is not acceptable to God, and it is juſtly deſpiſed by Men.

Laſtly, There is an other great Objection or Pretence of Drunkards yet behind, which is this, They happen to be in the Company of theſe Perſons who engage them to drink Healths, and theſe going often round, and there being an Obligation on them to pledge their next Neighbour, and to drink Cup for Cup, they are ſometimes unhappily overcome of the Liquor which preſents itſelf ſo faſt to them. This is their goodly Plea. But I anſwer, 1. They ought to ſhun the Company of thoſe whoſe Cuſtom it is to engage them to drink to Exceſs. 2. If they chance to fall into ſuch Company, it is their Duty to leave them as ſoon as they find them diſpoſed to promote Intemperance; this they are *engaged* to do by the Laws of Reaſon and Religion, but as for any *Obligation* which they talk of, they can prove no ſuch Thing. 3. As to *drinking of Healths*, I have this to ſay, drinking, and at the ſame Time wiſhing the Health of a Perſon, or deſiring God to bleſs him, is, in itſelf, not unlawful: For I may at any Time wiſh and pray for a Man's *Health* or *Proſperity*, becauſe it is even natural as well as chriſtian to bear good Will to others, and deſire their Welfare.

But then I muſt add theſe three Things: *Firſt*, I muſt do it *ſincerely* and *not hypocritically*: As is the Guiſe of many that are forward to promote the drinking of Healths, they frequently wiſh no Good to the Perſons who are remembred, but ſometimes they wiſh their Ill. *Secondly*, To deſire a *Bleſſing* on Perſons is an unfit Thing in ſome Drinkings, I mean thoſe that are accompanied with Exceſs. *Praying* and *Intemperance* do not agree. 3. I don't ſee that there is any Occaſion at all for Pledging of Healths, as is now the common Practice, and I find it blamed by a good Biſhop in the primitive Times, * He corrects and reproves the Chriſtians of his Time for drinking to the Safety of the Emperours, their Children, their Nobles, their Armies. 4. There ſhould be no *Conſtraint* and *Force* in Drinking: But this is the uſual Practice in thoſe Drinkings where *Healths* go round. Yea, theſe Healths are generally promoted to engage (that is, in plain *Engliſh*) to force Men to drink. They are no other than Drinking-Matches, ſuch as were in Faſhion among the *Pagan Greeks* and *Romans* of old. Drinking-Prizes were in Uſe amongſt them, there were Champions of *Bacchus*. Their Cuſtom was to *drink round*, that no Man might be exempted. This was called by the *Greeks* ἐν κύκλῳ πίνειν, and in one Word περισοβεῖν. There was a great capacious Veſſel which they called ἀνάγκη, ſaith *Heſychius*, becauſe it was *neceſſary* to drink it off when it came about to them: * A Cup of Neceſſity you may call it.

This circular Way of Debauchery, and ſtriving to outvie one an other in it, is often mentioned by the *Latins*, and hath ſeveral † Names given it which I will not trouble you with. To this Purpoſe the *Greeks* and *Romans* choſe ‡ *Overſeers* and *Governours* of their Drinking Revels: They conſtituted ſome to be as it were Commanders of their Drinking-Battles. This was done that ſome Order (ſuch as it was) might be kept among them, and that †† the Laws and Methods of Drinking might be obſerved. One of theſe was, that they muſt drink to the Honour of their Gods, their Princes and great Men, their Friends and their Miſtreſſes. An other of their Drinking Laws was, That the Wine muſt go round, and all muſt drink alike. Judge by this whether we at this Day do not ſymbolize with the *Pagans*. Do we not make Uſe of the ſame Artifices and Methods to uphold the Practice of Intemperance in our Drinking Meetings? Do we not feed and maintain this Vice by the like Ways that were among the debauched *Heathens*? If the Company pleaſeth, a Man muſt drink to the Honour of all the Kings and Princes in Chriſtendom, nay in the whole World, if they have a Mind to it: And after this he muſt drink the Healths of all the Men and Women, good or bad, that the Company can think of. And all this While the great Drinking-Maxim is obſerved, that the Glaſs muſt go round, and every one drink as much as an other. The Devil is very exact and juſt in this: No Man muſt be wronged of his Glaſs, though they do the greateſt Wrong to themſelves at the ſame Time. The *Circle* muſt be kept up by all Means, though in it the evil *Spirit* be moſt frequently *raiſed*, and very hardly *laid again*.

Yet, I muſt tell you, there was a *Pagan* Prince that broke this Circle (and ſeeing ſome Men are apt even to imitate *Pagans*, let them follow *them* in their Vertues and good Qualities rather than in their Vices and evil Actions.) The *Perſian* Emperour *Xerxes*, (but called by an *other Name* in Scripture, for there he is ſtiled *Ahaſuerus*) broke this wicked Cuſtom of drinking in the Way of a circular Compulſion. You read in *Eſther* i. 8. that *his* Law of Drinking was,

* *Ambroſ.* lib. *de Eliâ* & *Jejunio.* cap. 7.

* *Ananceum poculum.* Plaut.

† *Vini certamen*, Tibull. *Certare mero*, Horat. *Occurſoria potio*, Apulei. *Bacchus rotatus*, Sid. Apol.

‡ 'Οινόπτης, *Sympoſiarcha*, *Strategus*. *Magiſter cœnarum*, Martial. *Modimperator*, Varro. *Dictator*, Plaut. *Arbiter bibendi*, Horat.

†† Plin. Nat. Hiſt. lib. 14. cap. 12.

was, that [*none ſhould compel, and that every man ſhould drink according to his pleaſure*]. The Wine was ſet before them, and they were not confined, but left to their Liberty: He would have every Gueſt to drink as he pleaſed, and not to be forced to drink above what he thought fit: None ſhould have Healths put upon him againſt his Will. Thoſe Words are plain, *None was to compel.* Whence I gather that even the Light of Nature and common Reaſon, ſuch as *Pagans* attain to, condemns all *compulſory Healths* as unfitting and unlawful. At *Ahaſuerus*'s royal Feaſt all Perſons were left free to drink as they pleaſed: It was reckoned abſurd and unreaſonable to faſten a Bowl of Wine upon any Man, whether he would or no. From the Equitableneſs of this we have the Counſel of the wiſe Son of *Sirach*, *Preſs not upon a man with urging him to drink*, Ecclus. xxxi. 31.

And certainly this is alſo a *chriſtian Freedom*, and ſuch as becomes all that profeſs the Goſpel, the Goſpel which enjoins Sobriety and Moderation. The Contrary is unchriſtian, and utterly unbecoming all thoſe who name the Name of Jeſus. The Practice of drinking Healths in this Manner which I have mentioned, the making the Cup go round, ſo as to compel others to drink, is derived (as you have heard) from looſe and debauched Idolaters, and therefore ought not to be practiſed by thoſe who have renounced the Principles and Manners of thoſe Perſons, and have eſpouſed a Religion which requires Things of a quite different Nature. Let *Chriſtians* then be aſhamed to act as they did, and let it never be alledged by any of you as an *Excuſe* for Drunkenneſs that you were engaged to obſerve the Round, to drink as long as it came about, and to do as the Company did. So much in Anſwer to the *Objections* and *Pretences* of Men of Drink.

In the fourth and laſt Place, I am to offer to you ſome proper *Means* and *Helps* whereby you may effectually extirpate this odious Vice. They are ſuch as theſe.

1. Weigh this expreſs *Command* of God in the Text, *Be not drunk with wine, wherein is exceſs. Mahomet* commands *his* Followers the very ſame, yea, he ſtrictly forbids them the Freedom of the Grape: They muſt not ſo much as taſte it; and in Obedience to this Impoſtor they have for a long Time abſtained, though of late they begin to take ſome Liberty. But as being ſenſible how great Offence it is to violate the Law of their Prophet in that Matter, they are wont to ſummon their Souls out of their Bodies, or to charge them to lurk in ſome Corner of their Bodies (for after this Rate they talk) whilſt they indulge the Pleaſure of drinking Wine, that ſo by that Means they may not be guilty of Drunkenneſs, as they Fancy. Shall not *Chriſtians* then have a Senſe of the Obligation which is upon *them*, and be forward to obey the *Command* of their infallible Prophet and Maſter, eſpecially when he denies them *not* the Freedom of Drinking Wine, but only forbids the intemperate Uſe of it? Let it be remembered then that if we give Way to immoderate Drinking we diſobey the Injunctions of our divine Law-giver, we wilfully oppoſe the Command of our Lord and Soveraign. Wherefore be apprehenſive of your Duty, and know *who* it is that enjoins it, and take Care to do it in Obedience to the divine Command.

2. Conſider the *dreadful Woes* that are denounced againſt this Sin. Read with Trembling *Iſai.* v. 11. *Wo unto them that riſe up early in the Morning that they may follow ſtrong drink, that continue until night, 'till wine inflames them.* And *v.* 22. *Wo unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of ſtrength to mingle ſtrong drink.* Conſult *Prov.* xxiii. 29, &c. where ſeveral of the diſmal Effects of this Vice beforementioned are reckoned up. *Who hath woe? Who hath ſorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babling? Who hath wounds without cauſe? Who hath redneſs of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to ſeek mixt wine.* —— *At laſt it biteth like a ſerpent, and ſtingeth like an adder.* Nothing is more odious to Men than a Serpent, becauſe it is the worſt Sort of venomous Creatures, and proves pernicious and fatal to him, and therefore a wiſe Man will * fly from it. The like Hatred and Averſeneſs ought he to entertain againſt immoderate drinking of Wine: He will fly from it as from a Serpent. Let *us* be ſo wiſe, and let the ſerious Conſideration of the Evils and Woes

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* ——*Cane pejus & angue Vitabit.*——

Woes that attend it produce this Wiſdom in us. Believe it as an undeniable Truth that, notwithſtanding the fond Pretences wherewith Men flatter themſelves, this Vice hath the greateſt bodily and ſpiritual Miſeries attending upon it. This you will find excellently ſet forth in St. *Chryſoſtom's Homily of Sobriety*, and in St. *Baſil's of Drunkenneſs*, and in the Writings of ſome other eloquent and pious *Fathers*, who abound with admirable Diſſuaſives from this Sin on this Account. You will certainly find that, if you cheriſh this Vice in yourſelves or in others, it will be followed with direful Judgments. I can myſelf inſtance in ſome whom I have viſited on their Death-Beds, (and whoſe ſad Funeral Obſequies I have been afterwards deſired to celebrate with a ſeaſonable Diſcourſe) who have been ſnatched away from us in the Prime of their Age, who have been raviſhed from their Friends and Relations in the very Flower of their Years, and that merely by their *Exceſs in Drinking*, and following that Company which delighted in that Extravagance. Think of this, I intreat you, how many have been thus ſuddenly cut off by Intemperance. And as to yourſelves, think how ſad and uncomfortable it will be if any of you ſhould be caſt into a violent Feaver, or ſome other mortal Sickneſs by your immoderate Drinking. How vain then will it be to wiſh you had been ſober, and to reſolve to be ſo afterwards? To what Purpoſe will this be when you are going hence to receive the Puniſhment of your obſtinate Folly?

This therefore I muſt add under the preſent Head, That the *Woe* which belongs to the Intemperate and Debauched, will follow them into the *other World*. *Know ye not*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that the unrighteous ſhall not enter into the kingdom of God?* And among theſe he reckons *Drunkards* particularly: *Be not deceived*, ſaith he, *neither fornicators*, &c. *Nor drunkards ſhall inherit the kingdom of God*, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. And again in *Gal.* v. 21. he reckons Drunkenneſs among the *works of the fleſh*, and adds, *that they who do ſuch things ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God*. If theſe Perſons be excluded from *Heaven*, (as the Apoſtle aſſures us in theſe two Places) where can their Portion be but in *Hell?* They go down to that infernal Lake which burns with Fire and Brimſtone, and there, like *Dives*, they in vain call for Water to cool their Tongues, thoſe Tongues which were over-heated with Exceſs of Drink. Think of this then that Drunkenneſs is a Vice of a *damnable Nature*, and let *that* check your Exorbitancy.

3. Conſider that this Vice is condemned even by thoſe that are guilty of it. There is not a Drunkard that breathes but at one Time or other is caſt by his own Verdict, he paſſes Sentence againſt himſelf. Let even the Man whoſe Exceſs hath hurried him into Luxury and Drunkenneſs be the Judge in this Caſe, and when the Vapours of Drink are vaniſhed out of his diſturbed Brain, and when any Degree of Soberneſs and Reaſon hath poſſeſſed him, he will condemn his Vice of Intemperance, if it be only on this Account that it injures his Body, and diſturbs that hail Temper which otherwiſe he enjoys. And tho' the Man by the next Sollicitation is tempted to bear his Part in a merry Meeting, and ſo runs into the ſame Exceſs of Riot which he indulged before, yet ſtill his Conſcience and Experience tell him that 'tis far more eaſy and pleaſant to be temperate. Thus Drunkenneſs is a Sin which thoſe who are addicted to it, will not defend, when they once return to ſober and ſerious Thoughts, and rightly underſtand what they ſay and do. A Drunkard (if he be a Man of any Ingenuity) is aſhamed of this Folly, and his Face is redder with Bluſhes than ever it was with Wine, when he ſeriouſly conſiders of what he hath done. Let this therefore prevail with you to abandon this pernicious Vice, and to devote yourſelves to Sobriety.

4. That you may do ſo, learn to reliſh the Pleaſures of Religion and Holineſs. Be acquainted with the Excellency of Vertue and Goodneſs, underſtand the intrinſick Worth of theſe. Learn to converſe with God, and to prefer the Delights which are in Communion with him, and in the Exerciſe of a good Conſcience before all ſenſual and bodily Pleaſures: And then you will not be prevailed with at any Time to take Delight in this vile Sin. For if you come once to taſte the Delicacies of Religion and a holy Life, you will eaſily deſpiſe the World and its fond Diverſions, and you will not be forward to run

abroad, and look for Companions, you will be content to ſit alone, and to enentertain yourſelves without Society; or you will chooſe none but ſuch as will courage you in the Ways of Vertue and Sobriety. See then that you maintain conſtant Communion with God, live daily in the Contemplation of his Excellencies and Perfections, converſe with Jeſus, your Lord, your Saviour, your Bridegroom, and then you will with the Spouſe * *remember his love more than wine*, you will prize heavenly Pleaſures above thoſe that are earthly, eſpecially if they be immoderate and unlawful.

* Can. i. 4.
* v. 2.

5. That you may caſt off this abominable Vice, and ſtifle your exceſſive Delight in intemperate Drinking, and in that Mirth which attends it, ſit down, and ſeriouſly think of the Diſtreſſes and Miſeries which your Brethren labour under, in one Part or other of the World. Whilſt you are loud in your Mirth, they are ſo in their Lamentations, and call to you to pity their calamitous Condition. The Conſideration of their unhappy Circumſtances will not permit you to be laviſh in your Pleaſures, if you have any true Senſe of Goodneſs. When the wanton *Jews drank wine in bowls*, it is obſerved at the ſame Time that * *they were not grieved for the afflictions of Joſeph.* If they had done this *Latter*, they would not have been guilty of the *Former*, *i. e.* they would not have been ſo extravagantly merry. Whilſt the Proteſtant Churches abroad are under Perſecution, whilſt God's Servants mourn, it will not become you to be exorbitant in your Rejoycings. Whilſt the Church of God ſits in Aſhes, do not you affect the Jollity of Carnavals. Whilſt *Jeruſalem* weeps, do not you give yourſelves up to Laughter. But weep now with thoſe that weep, that you may afterwards rejoice with thoſe that rejoice.

* Amos vi. 6.

6thly and *Laſtly*, That you may effectually abandon this Vice, be careful to avoid all the Occaſions of it. Firſt, come not into the Meetings of thoſe Perſons whom you know or ſuſpect to be great Drinkers. The Apoſtle writ to the *Corinthians not to keep company with a brother that was a drunkard, with ſuch a one no not to eat*, 1 Cor. v. 11. *i. e.* not to converſe with him. Much leſs are you permitted to drink with him, *i. e.* to join with him in Society. Leave him, and go your Way. *Secondly*, If ſome lawful and neceſſary Buſineſs occaſion your ſtaying in the Company of drinking Men, ſee that you guard yourſelves well. *Solomon*'s Advice is now ſeaſonable, *Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itſelf aright*, Prov. xxiii. 31. Remember that in that bloody Colour the Sentence of Death is contained: That is, if you be tempted to drink immoderately of it, and cloſe with the Temptation, it will prove unſpeakably dangerous and fatal to you. Curb therefore your Inclination and Appetite: And remember that, to gain the Vertue of Sobriety, you muſt deny yourſelves. *Thirdly*, If the bold Friends of the Cabaret will be intruding upon you, and ſollicite you to be intemperate, do you as boldly and reſolutely refuſe to comply with them. Be not tamely impoſed upon by Drinking-men, give a Repulſe to their importunate Sollicitations, and let them ſee that you are in good Earneſt, and ſcorn to comport with their unreaſonable Offers. 4. Though you be able to bear much Drink, yet do not uſe yourſelves to it: For by this Means you will proceed at laſt to ſuch large Draughts as will over-ſet you. Whilſt you rely upon the Strength of your Brain, you may ſoon be overcome; beſides that, by continual Uſe you may contract a Weakneſs, and in a ſhort Time be able to bear no more than others, and then your accuſtoming yourſelves to this Vice will be more than ordinarily prejudicial to you, for your Deſire will remain though your Ability be gone. Therefore follow that Advice in *Ecclus.* xxxi. 25. *Shew not thy valiantneſs in wine*, brag not of thy Ability and Strength to drink a greater Quantity than generally can be born by other Men. 5. If you can bear but a leſſer Portion of Wine or any other ſtrong Drink, do not endeavour to make yourſelf more capable of bearing greater Meaſures. This was the undue Practice of ſome Drinkers of old, they uſed to fortify themſelves againſt the Liquor they were to drink: So the *Romans* did by eating raw Coleworts, and the *Egyptians* by eating boiled ones: And others of the Ancients uſed to eat Lettice at the End of Supper for the ſame Purpoſe, namely, to prepare them for further Drinking, and to prevent the Hurt that might come by it. Let *Abſtinence* be your beſt Preſervative and only Fortification. If Mr. *Herbert's* Rule, *Stay at the third Glaſs*, be too ſtrict for you, however be ſure that you ſtop in Time, and ſuffer not the Drink to ſteal upon you by Degrees, and inſenſibly overcome you *6thly* and *Laſtly*, Pray unto God to enable you to reſiſt all the Temptations of Intemperance. If your good Nature, as you call it, be apt to betray you, if you have not Courage enough to reſiſt the Aſſaults, earneſtly beg of God to aſſiſt you continually, and to ſtrengthen you above what you are able of yourſelves. Deſire him to fill your Hearts with an entire Love of Sobriety and Temperance, that That may ever be an inward Check to all Immoderation in your Lives. And to your *Prayers* add ſolemn *Vows* and fixed *Reſolutions*, and thereby firmly engage yourſelves to a ſober and ſerious Way of Living.

I hope theſe Things which I have thus plainly and freely ſpoken to you, will have ſome Influence upon you, upon thoſe of you that have been and are vicious in that Kind I have been ſpeaking of. I beſeech you weigh what I have ſaid, impartially conſider what I have ſuggeſted to you. Remember how you diſgrace your Religion, how you diſhonour God, how you loſe your precious Time, how you wound and debauch your Conſciences, how you indamage both your Souls and Bodies, and how you treaſure up Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath, by giving Way to this Courſe of Life. I beſeech you revolve theſe Things in your Minds, and then I ſhall entertain good Hopes that thoſe who have hitherto lived in Exceſs, will be reclaimed from that evil Practice, and give Proof for the Future of a ſober Converſation. *Diogenes Laertius* and *Valerius Maximus* relate this Paſſage concerning *Polemo*, a drunken vicious *Athenian*, That he (with his Companions) came into *Xenocrates's* School whilſt he was reading concerning *Temperance*, and the Philoſopher gave him ſo warm a Lecture, that the intemperate young Man liſtened to it, and went Home, and was reclaimed, and became a ſober Man ever after. I will not deſpond of the ſame Succeſs: I hope the Preaching of a Miniſter of the Goſpel will be as ſucceſsful as a Philoſopher's Lecture. I hope the particular Diſcovering and Reproving of the Sin of Drunkenneſs will, by the divine Bleſſing, be laid to Heart by you, and that ſome guilty Perſon will ſilently go hence convinced and reclaimed, and that he will for the Future obſerve the ſtrict Laws of Chriſtianity, which utterly declare againſt this unreaſonable Exorbitancy, and that he will for the Time to come be mindful of the Apoſtle's Charge, *Be not drunk with wine wherein is exceſs.*

I have done now with the *Dehortation* or *Negative Command* in the Text, which was the chief Thing I deſigned in the Choice of theſe Words. I will add ſomething briefly concerning the *Exhortation* or *Poſitive Precept*, and ſo conclude. The Antitheſis here is plain, *Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit.* No Man can be filled with the Spirit of God and with Wine at the ſame Time. Theſe two are oppoſite, and mutually exclude one another. There is no Room for the Holy Spirit where Intemperance and Exceſs inhabit. *The Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink* even in this Senſe, but *Righteouſneſs, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt.* Which ſhould prevail with us to addict ourſelves to Sobriety and Temperance, that we may not be deſtitute of the Holy Spirit of Grace.

Further, I may obſerve to you, that as the *being filled with the Spirit* is *oppoſed* to the *being filled with Wine*, ſo likewiſe it is *compared* with it. There is a harmleſs and ſacred Inebriation in holy Men which anſwers to that pernicious and prophane Drunkenneſs which is in other Perſons. As theſe are *filled with Wine*, ſo thoſe muſt be *filled with the Spirit.* Here then is a neceſſary Duty commended to us under the Name of an odious Vice: And yet the Vice is not countenanced, nor the Duty diſcredited: But the Uncomelineſs and Baſeneſs of the Former render the Latter more lovely: And the Lovelineſs of this ſets out the Deformity of that. God, who is able to extract Good out of Evil, is pleaſed ſometimes to ſhadow out Vertues to us under the Names of Vices, and to teach us our Duty from others Sins. There was a holy Man in the primitive Times who had learnt this, and practiſed it. When he ſaw a lewd Curteſan very curious and exact in her Dreſs, and conſidered with what extraordinary Care, and at how many Hours Expence ſhe had been marſhalling all that Bravery, and to no other End but that ſhe might by this meretricious Garb pleaſe her expected Paramours, he (good Man) made this pious Reflection, That he had a *Soul* to adorn and make ready for Heaven, but he had not uſed that Care about it which that vain Woman had for her *Body*, and therefore he blamed himſelf hugely that he was leſs careful and ſollicitous in preparing himſelf to entertain his Lord Chriſt Jeſus, than ſhe was in her Preparations for unlawful Gueſts. Thus this holy Man. And our Apoſtle makes a ſpiritual Advantage of the Weakneſs and Ignorance of *Childhood*, and from thence his Advice to the *Corinthians* is, *Be not children in underſtanding, but in malice be ye children.* Since ſome Men are *covetous*, the ſame Apoſtle takes Occaſion to exhort unto a commendable and holy Avarice, *Covet earneſtly the beſt gifts.* Are ſome Men *ambitious* and of ſoaring Thoughts? The Apoſtle will direct them to a ſacred Ambition, *Seek ye the things that are above.* Are others *drunken with wine, wherein is exceſs?* The Apoſtle will from thence offer to you this pious Counſel, *Be ye filled too, but with the Spirit.* Here it is impoſſible to be guilty of any Exceſs and Immoderation. This *filling with the Spirit, i. e.* with the Grace and Comforts of the Holy Spirit is not unfitly compared to a *Repletion with Wine:* For the Effects and Products of both are of a reſembling Nature, which is intimated in theſe Words following, [*Speaking to yourſelves in pſalms, and hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, ſinging, and making melody in your hearts to the Lord*]. If ye be filled with the Spirit, that Fulneſs will vent and diſplay itſelf in ſome outward and apparent Tokens, as you ſee the ſenſual Joy of thoſe doth who are exalted with Wine. Yea, it will evidence itſelf in ſuch lively Emotions and Tranſports of Soul as will ſhame that looſer Mirth and Jollity which are the Iſſue of Wine and ſtrong Drink.

The *Tongues* of holy Men tell the inward Rejoycing which they feel in their Souls: And they not only *ſpeak* but *ſing* when their Hearts are warmed with this Wine of Angels. *Abraham laughed* for Joy when this bleſſed Gueſt had inſpired his Soul. *David danced* before the Ark when he was inebriated with this ſacred Spirit. * The *Martyrs* of God were drunk with this Cup, ſaith a devout Father, when going to ſuffer they would not know their Friends and Relations, *i. e.* when they diſſuaded them from dying for Chriſt. The ſad Bemoaning and Lamenting of Parents could not ſtop them, the Crying of their forlorn Babes could not move them, the Bewailings and Outcries, and the moſt paſſionate Tears of their yet nearer Relatives were not able to prevail with them. They went on to their Execution undaunted and unconcerned. † Wonder not at this Carriage of theirs: They were *drunk*. They are the *Father*'s own Words, and therefore pardon them if they ſeem harſh. They are *filled with the Spirit*, and by that they felt a Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory, which made them do and ſuffer ſuch great Things. This is (as *Philo* expreſſeth it) * to be drunk with a ſober Drunkenneſs. All good Men are ſo, ſaith he, † they are plentifully drunk with Goodneſs, they take down full Draughts of perfect Vertue.

Let us then make our devout Addreſſes unto this holy Spirit, that he would continually prepare and diſpoſe our Minds for the Reception of his Grace, that he would effectually open and enlarge our Hearts that we may be *filled* with it, and that this may ever be in us the Parent of an innocent Joy, a ſolid Peace and laſting Tranquillity, ſuch as may raiſe us above this World, and exalt us to the Fruition of eternal Peace and Reſt.

* *Hoc calice inebriati erant Martyres*, &c.

† *Nolite mirari: Ebrii erant.*

* μεθύειν τὴν νηφάλιον μέθην.

† τὰ ἀγαθὰ ἀθρόα ἠκρατισμένοι, ϗ τὰς προπόσεις παρὰ τελείας ἀρετῆς δεξάμενοι. *Philo de Temulentiâ.*

The Consideration of the *Brevity* and *Uncertainty* OF MAN's LIFE.

JOB XIV. I.

Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.

THE **Brevity** of Man's Life, and the *miſerable State* of it, are here joined together by holy *Job*; and ſo they are likewiſe by the *Patriarch Jacob* in that parallel Place in *Gen.* xlvii. 9. [*Few* and *evil* are the Days of the Years of my Pilgrimage]. This *Latter* (*viz.* the *Trouble and Miſery* of this preſent Life) is worth your ſerious Conſideration. And here I might run thro' the ſeveral Stages of Man's Life, and ſhew you the *Evils* and *Miſery* that are annexed to it, and are its inſeparable Companions. Every diſtinct Age hath its particular and peculiar Infelicities. To begin with *Infancy*, The poor Babe when he peeps into the World enters upon it as on a *Stage* where he muſt *act his Part*. But it ſeems he came not forth out of any *Attiring-Room*, he ſteps upon the Theatre of this World *naked*. And even after he hath been ſeveral Months there, although you ſhould bring him a *whole Wardrobe*, he doth not know how to put any of it on. And he is as defective as to all *other Matters*, for he is only *beginning* to live; he hath but made his *Appearance* on the Stage: He hath no Ability to *act* yet. *Infancy* is but a lower and meaner Sort of Life. The Creature ſcarcely knows that it lives: And yet it is already ſubject to *Pain and Miſery*: It is ſenſible of *Sickneſſes and Diſtempers*, and lets you know as much by its frequent Outcries and Lamentations. This is the *firſt Entrance* of Man's Life.

Now the Sun is getting up, and by and by comes the *Spring*, which is *Childhood*. Now the Days lengthen, now the young Plant ſprouts out apace, and ſhews its Verdure. But alas *Childhood* is but weak and ignorant, and not much advanced above the *other State* beforementioned. The little Thing can uſe his Feet, and is very deſirous to go abroad. Now this little Actor *ſhews himſelf*. But then he is liable to innumerable Dangers and Hazards, for he is unwary and cannot diſcern them: Or if he could, he is weak and impotent, and is not able to avoid them.

But after ſome Years are expired, he arrives to *Youth*: And now he openly *acts his Part upon the Stage*, and is ſenſible of the World's *Applauſe*. *Youth* is fair and pleaſant, gay and ſportful. The Fields are green, the Flowers bud and bloſſom, the Sun is warm, and 'tis *April* and *May* with him. But in blooming Years expect no *Fruit*; or if any appear, it is very raw and indigeſted. But there are innumerable Temptations proper to *this* State of Life. Fond *Youth* is eaſily deluded, ſoon miſled and perverted, corrupted and debauched.

Next ſucceeds *Manhood* or Full-Age. Now it is high Summer. The Flowers are full-blown, the Corn is hardening and towards ripening. But ſometimes Storms and Winds diſorder them: Or too much Heat and Sunſhine ſcorch them: Whereas before (*viz.* in our Youth) our Nouriſhment was ſeen in our *Growth*, now alas our Food ſuffices only to keep up that which was gotten. The Sun is now come to its Height, and ſee how it is beginning to deſcend. The Fruit is ripe and therefore muſt be *gathered*.

Now is *Autumn* come. The Vigour of Mankind declines, the former Strength fails, and there are daily Symptoms of a crazy Temper. The Leaves fall from the Trees, his Hairs ſhed. And now the Days ſhorten more and more: The Sun gives little Heat: The Flowers are withered, the Fields look diſconſolately.

Winter is now arrived. The Man is cold and weak, his Days of Darkneſs are come: He is now a Child the Second Time, which he diſcovers by Scarcity of Teeth and Hair, by weak and feeble Joynts, by benummed Limbs, by faltering with his Feet, and ſometimes by his fooliſh and childiſh Actions. And theſe are attended with Diſeaſes, Pains and Aches, Complaints and Outcries, weary Days and reſtleſs Nights, and a general Diſorder both in Body and Soul. Thus the whole Life of Man is beſet with *Miſery*. Infancy is a Life of Ignorance and Weakneſs. Childhood and Youth are ſurrounded with Folly and Vanity. Manhood is a State of ſerious Trouble. And Old Age is the Parent of Sickneſs and Death. [Thus Man that is born of Woman is full of *Trouble*.]

But it is the *former Part* of the Text which I intend to inſiſt upon, therefore I paſs from the *Miſery* of Man's Life to the *Brevity* of it, from the *Trouble* of his Days to the *Fewneſs* of them. Man that is born of a Woman (*i. e.* whoever the Perſon be that is of *human Race*, for [Man] in this Place, and in ſeveral other Texts of Scripture, comprehends *both Sexes*, Man and Woman) He and She that are of human Extraction are but of *few Days*. So the *Hebrews* expreſs the *Shortneſs of Life*. It is reckoned by *Days*, which are but a ſhort Meaſure of Time, and therefore the fitter to ſet forth the *Brevity* of Man's Life. Here 1. I will ſhew you *more generally* that Man's Life is very ſhort and contracted. And 2. I will *particularly diſcover* this to you by ſhewing you *how* and in *what Reſpects* it is ſo ſhort. And *Laſtly*, I will let you ſee what practical *Inferences* are to be made from this Doctrine.

Firſt, *More generally* I will ſet before you the Shortneſs of Man's Life, as it is deciphered to us in the Stile of holy Scripture. There you will find that it is diſplayed by ſeveral *Similitudes* in a very elegant and lively Manner. No one hath better performed this Task than the Penman of my Text: I will begin with that Similitude which he uſes in *chap.* vii. *v.* 6. [*My days are ſwifter than a weaver's ſhuttle*]. The *Thread* of Life is *ſpun fine*, it is thin and ſubtile of itſelf; but this is put into the *Shuttle*, and then moved and toſſed to and fro. See with what *Swiftneſs* it paſſes backwards and forwards, the buſy Shuttle plays continually, and never ceaſes: It flies up and down as if it had Wings, and never continues in one Stay.

There are three other excellent Metaphors or Compariſons which you meet with together in the ix*th* Chapter of this Book, and the 25*th* and 26*th* Verſes. [*My days are ſwifter than a poſt; they flee away, they ſee no good.*] I ride full Speed, and nothing ſtops me in the Way. I *haſten*, I am on the full Career 'till I come to the End of my Journey. He adds in the next Words, [*My days are paſſed away like the ſwift ſhips*]. An *other* excellent Compariſon to ſet forth the *Brevity* of Man's Life. *Swift Ships*, or (according to the *Hebrew*) *Ships of Deſire*, *i. e.* Ships in which the Paſſengers *ſpeedily* arrive at the *deſired Haven*. Both *this* and the *former* Similitude are made Uſe of in *Wiſd.* v. 9, 10. where the *Lives* (particularly of the Ungodly) *are ſaid to paſs away as a poſt that haſteth by, and as a ſhip that paſſeth over the waves of the water, which when it is gone by,* the *trace thereof cannot be found, neither the path-way of the keel in the waves*]. If there be any here that have been acquainted with the Sea, and have been employed in the great Waters, they can tell how fit and appoſite a Compariſon *this* is, they will inform you with what extraordinary and almoſt incredible Swiftneſs thoſe Veſſels are hurried upon the Ocean (as if their *Sails* were *Wings*); with what Celerity they plough up the Deep, with what Quickneſs and Expedition they traverſe the Surface of the Main, and reach the deſired Port. In the ſame Verſe 'tis added, [*as the eagle that haſteneth to the prey*]; as that ravenous Bird, ſharpened and ſet on by Hunger, flies at its Game with exceſſive eagerneſs and Speed; ſuch is Man's Life; it is *ſwift and ſoon* gone.

Let us in the next Place obſerve how the *Pſalmiſt* ſets forth the Brevity of our Lives in *Pſal.* xxxix. 5. *Behold, thou haſt made my days as a hand-breadth*]. Four Digits are the ſcant Meaſure of Man's Life, to ſignify the *Shortneſs* of his Abode here. Therefore it is rendered by the vulgar *Latin Menſurabiles poſuiſti dies meos.* Man's Life, if you exactly meaſure it, is all but a *Span*, *i. e.* his whole Being and Abode here on Earth is ſhort and uncertain, frail and fickle. And this is *further* deſcribed in *Pſal.* xc. 5, 6. [*They are like graſs which groweth up*]; and in [*Pſal.* ciii. 15. *As for Man, his days are as graſs*]. Yea, [*all fleſh is graſs*] Iſai. xl. 6. This is true even in a literal Senſe, as the ingenious Author in his Treatiſe of *Vulgar Errors* hath obſerved. Moſt Creatures are Herbs and Graſs of the Field turned into Fleſh: And ſo are we ourſelves in a remote Manner, who feed upon thoſe Animals. We are a Kind of *Anthropophagi*, of a ſtrange Nature: We devour ourſelves. All this Maſs of Fleſh which we carry about us entered in at our Mouths, it was once upon our Tables, and moſt of that was Graſs carnified. But to paſs by that Notion; the plain and obvious Meaning of the Scripture (when it pronounces us *Graſs*) is no other than *this*; That we ſoon wither and decay: In a ſhort Time we periſh and are troden under Feet like Graſs. Or, if we decay not *of ourſelves*, yet, *like Graſs*, we are ſoon *cut down*, the Sythe ſtays for us. But you may obſerve that the Pſalmiſt ſaith of Man, [*as a flower of the field, ſo he flouriſheth*] Pſal. ciii. 15. It is not a Flower of the *Garden*, but of the *Field*. This *Latter* is more ſubject to Decay than the *Former*, becauſe it lies more open to the nipping Air and violent Winds, and to the browſing Mouth of the Beaſt, and is more liable to be trampled upon: By all theſe Ways it decayeth as well as by the ſcorching Sun, and its own fading Temper. Thus Man is like the *flower of the field.*

The Pſalmiſt makes Uſe of an *other* Similitude, *Pſal.* cii. 11. [*My days are like a ſhadow*], and in *Pſal.* xcii. 11. [*my days are like a ſhadow that declineth*]. And *Job*'s Friend uſeth the ſame Compariſon [*our days upon earth are a ſhadow*], and *Job* himſelf, in the Verſe after my Text, [*he fleeth as a ſhadow, and continueth not.*] Which well expreſſes the fickle and uncertain State of Man's Life, it vaniſhes away and diſappears juſt as the dark Shadow doth when the Sun ſhews itſelf. When this glorious Light appears, the black Shade is immediately baniſhed, and can be no more diſcerned.

And to this dusky Shadow you may adjoin that *Vapour* which St. *James* compares the Life of Man to. *What is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſhes away*, James, iv. 14. Man's Life is a Vapour, and that without a Metaphor: It may be ſaid to be ſo in a ſtrict and philoſophical Senſe, for it is a ſubtile Evaporation or Steam ſent up from the active *Blood* which runs in our Veins and Arteries. This is made a Vehicle for the Soul, and thence Life and Activity diſplay themſelves. This is the Senſe of the learned Dr. *Harvey*, and of other eminent Philoſophers, and was the old Doctrine, as the Book of *Moſes* acquaints us, namely, that the *Blood*, that is, the ſpirituous Part of it is the *Life of Man*. It is fitly called a *Vapour* or *Exhalation*, becauſe it appears but for a little Time, and then diſappears: For a Vapour is raiſed out of the Earth by the Warmth of the Sun, and is carried up aloft, and hovers a ſmall Time in the Air, and then vaniſhes. Such is the Life of Man, and ſuch is Man himſelf: He takes his Original from the Earth, he is held up a While in a hovering State, and then expires and leaves this World. Here I might obſerve that *Vapour* is a Word that the *Hebrew* Maſters uſe, to ſignify *Vanity*, any Thing that is fading and periſhing, and ſoon vaniſhes away. *Man is like unto vanity*, Pſal. cxliv. 4. like to *Vapour*, ſaith R. *Kimchi*. So *lighter than vanity*, Pſal. lxii. 9. is the ſame with *lighter than Vapour* according to that learned Expoſitor. And 'tis obſervable that *Hebel*, which is the Word for *Vanity*, is uſed by the *Talmudiſts* for a *Vapour* or *Exhalation*.

I might ſhew you that the prophane Writers uſe the very *ſame Similitudes and Compariſons*, to ſet forth the Brevity of Man's Life, that the holy Scripture doth, and they ſuperadd ſome others: I will mention only this one, as 'tis admirably repreſented by *Lucian* in one of his *Dialogues*, * Did you never ſee, ſaith he, on the Surface of the Water a Company of floating Bubbles, mere impoſtumed Water, frothy Hemiſpheres, which after they have danced a While, ſome ſhorter and ſome a longer Time, vaniſh and diſappear? Such, juſt ſuch is the Life of mortal Man: It is light and airy, and of a ſhort Continuance: His *Days are few*. Thus far in general.

Now more *particularly* I am to ſhew *how*, and *in what Reſpects* Man's Life is ſhort. It is ſo 1. Comparatively. 2. Abſolutely. 3. Judicially. 4. Out of Mercy and Kindneſs.

Firſt, Man's Life is ſhort *Comparatively*. Which I will make good in theſe following Particulars, 1. If Man's Life be compared with the Lives of the People before the *Flood*, and ſometime after that. 2. If compared with the *Duration of the World*. 3. With the *Lives* of ſome *Brutes*. 4. With the Time that moſt Men *abide in the Grave*. 5. With *Eternity*. I will ſpeak ſomewhat largely of the firſt of theſe, and briefly of the reſt.

Firſt, It will appear that our Life is now *ſhort* in Compariſon of the many Years which our Forefathers lived *before* the Flood, and ſometime *after* it. The Patriarch *Jacob* tells us, *Gen.* xlvii. 9. that *the days of the years of his pilgrimage were a hundred and thirty years*, and theſe he counts *few*, in Reſpect of the Years of his Forefathers, *The days of the years of my life*, ſaith he, *have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my progenitors*, eſpecially of theſe that were before the *Flood*. The ſacred Hiſtory mentions ſome of them who lived Eight Hundred Years, and others that climbed as high as Nine Hundred Years and upwards. The infallible Records acquaint us that the Lives of ſome were extended to almoſt a Thouſand Years. But that which I have to obſerve to you is, that there have been ſeveral *gradual Abbreviations* of Man's Life. Death hath been coming nearer and nearer to us, as you may ſee in the ſeveral Ages and Periods of the World. *Adam*, the firſt of human Kind, lived Nine Hundred and thirty Years. And Seven or Eight Hundred Years was a uſual Period of Man's Life before the *Flood*. But the Sacred Hiſtory (which hath the Advantage and Preheminence of all other Hiſtories whatſoever, by Reaſon of its *Antiquity*) acquaints us that immediately *after the Flood* the Years of Man's Life were ſhortened by no leſs than half. I ſay, *after the Flood*, for I give no Credit to what *Joſephus* ſaith, *viz.* that God ſhortened Man's Life *before the Deluge*, and that he brought it down to the Space of a Hundred and Twenty Years, and no more. Which Miſtake of his (in his *1ſt* Book of *Antiq.* and *4th chap.*) is grounded, I ſuppoſe, on *thoſe* Words in *Gen.* vi. 3. [*Man's days ſhall be a hundred and twenty years*]; which are miſinterpreted by him to the Intent and Meaning aforeſaid: But the true

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* Ἤδη ποτὲ πομφόλυγας ἐν ὕδατι ἐθεάσω &c. *Dialog. inter Charont. & Mercur.*

Meaning of thoſe Words is this, that it ſhall be a Hundred and Twenty Years before the Flood comes. Mens Days ſhall be lengthened out ſo far: So long a Time they ſhall have to repent of their Sins, and to turn unto God: Which if they fail to do (as we know they did) they ſhall all be ſwept away with the devouring Deluge, which ſhall be brought upon the whole Earth a Hundred and Twenty Years hence: For *my ſpirit ſhall not always ſtrive with man*, and therefore he ſhall have no longer Time than that which is prefixed him, the Space of a Hundred and Twenty Years. So that you ſee this doth not defeat my former Obſervation, that the Life of Men before the Flood was extended to an exceeding great Length.

Nor can it be alledged here, that the Years and Months at that Time were not *calculated* as they are now; for I have proved in another Place, that there was little or no Difference between *that Computation* and *ours*. I will mention only one Place to demonſtrate this, *Gen.* vii. 11, 24. There are numbered a *hundred and fifty days*, from the 17th *day of the* 2d *month* to the 17th *of the* 7th *month*. So that a Hundred and Fifty Days are containedin five Months, and conſequently a Month contains thirty Days, for there are five Times thirty in a Hundred and Fifty. This plainly ſhews that the *Antediluvians* reckoned as we do, and that their Years and ours are in a Manner the ſame: And thence it follows, that the Account which is given us of the Longevity of the People before the Flood is true and exact, and conſequently that Man's Life was not ſhortened 'till after the Flood.

And *then* it was apparently ſhorter than it was before, for they fell from Nine Hundred, Eight Hundred, and Seven Hundred Years to Four Hundred and Three Hundred, as we ſee in the Age of *Arphaxad*, *Salah*, *Heber*: Yea, they fell to Two Hundred and odd Years, as we read of *Peleg*, *Reu*, *Serug* and *Tharah*: Yea, they came down to leſs than Two Hundred Years. In the Space of a few Years Man's Life was again cut ſhorter by almoſt Half, if not a full Half. We read that *Abraham* lived but One Hundred and Seventy Five Years, ſo that Man's Age ran very low then. See the Account given in Scripture *Nahor*, *Sarah*, *Iſmael*, *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, *Joſeph* (who died at a Hundred) which confirms the ſame. And again the *third Time*, Man's Life was ſhortened by almoſt an *other Half*, *viz.* about the Year of the World 2500, in *Moſes*'s Time. For he ſets the Bounds of Man's Life thus in *Pſal.* xc. 10. [*The days of our years are threeſcore years and ten: and if by reaſon of ſtrength they be fourſcore years, yet is their ſtrength but labour and ſorrow, for it is ſoon cut off and we flee away.*] Eighty Years is the utmoſt Line he ſets Man's Life at, *i. e.* in the moſt *ordinary* and *common Account* of Man's Life. Tho' ſome are of the Opinion that theſe Words do not give an Account of the Duration of Man's Life in *general*, but refer to the ſhort Lives of the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs, yet I do not ſee but it may take in both: And tho' *Moſes*, who compoſed the Pſalm, lived a Hundred and Twenty Years himſelf, yet he might ſpeak of the *common Term* of Man's Life, and what uſually happened to the Generality of Men. The Years of Man are *Seventy*, this is the great Stage of Life, this is the Goal which ſtints his Race. And tho' there be ſome few Perſons that run beyond it, yet the moſt come ſhort of it, and are not able to reach ſo far. I am now ſpeaking of the ordinary Period of Man's Life, which exceeds not threeſcore and ten Years: This was the juſt Extent of *Samuel*'s Age, and of King *David*'s, and this was reckoned *Old Age*, 1 *Chron*, xxix. 28. 'Tis ſaid of *David*, *He died in a good old age, full of days.*

And therefore you may conclude that thoſe Hiſtorians who ſet ſome Mens Lives in theſe laſt Ages at Two Hundred or Three Hundred Years, are fabulous and not to be credited. Thus *Johannes de Temporibus*, who was of the Guard to the Emperour *Charles the Great*, lived, they ſay, Three Hundred and Sixty One Years: And ſeveral other ſuch Fictions paſs amongſt ſome Authors. But there is no Reaſon to attend to them, for the general Limits of Man's Life are ſet, and have been ſo ever ſince *Moſes*'s Time. We in this Age live as long as they did then: and the Age of Man hath not been abated or brought lower theſe Three Thouſand Years laſt paſt. And thus I have finiſhed the firſt Particular, to wit, That in *Compariſou* of the Years of thoſe who lived before the general Inundation, and ſome Time after, our Days are very few. What is Threeſcore or Fourſcore Years, yea a Hundred, if compared with Seven, Eight, yea Nine Hundred? What *Adam* wanted of a Thouſand Years, that now ſuffices the oldeſt Man for a whole Life. Thus in reſpect of the long Lives of the Antediluvian Patriarchs, the Term of human Lives is now ſhort.

Secondly, So it is if we compare it with the *Duration of the world. One generation goeth, and another cometh, but the earth abideth for ever*, ſaith the Royal Preacher, *Eccl.* i. 4. The World ſtill holds out, it hath been kept up above Five Thouſand Years, which is a vaſt Circumference of Time. Thus the greater World exceeds the leſſer in Duration. I mean if you ſpeak of Man as he is made up of *Body and Soul* in this inferior World, in this imperfect and mortal State. Theſe are ſoon divorc'd, a little Time ſeparates and disjoins them.

Thirdly, Man's Life is ſhort and contracted, if you compare it with the Years that ſome *irrational Creatures* live. * *Tully* tells us, "That *Theophraſtus* "complain'd that Nature had beſtow'd a long Life on ſome Brutes, and yet "had given but a ſhort one to Man, the Lord of all the Creatures." If we may credit ſome natural Hiſtorians, ſome Eagles and Ravens among Birds, and ſome Stags and Elephants among Beaſts are very long-lived. Of this laſt Sort, ſome live Two Hundred, ſome Three Hundred Years, their Youth beginning but at Sixty, as † *Pliny* relates. And the Crocodile, which is an amphibious Creature, and may be reckon'd both among Fiſhes and terreſtrial Animals, is ſaid to be of vaſt Duration. Not only *Pliny*, but *Cardan* and the Lord *Verulam* and Mr. *Willoughby* ſpeak of the Longevity of certain Brutes. But becauſe I am not fully ſatisfy'd about this Matter, I ſhall not inſiſt upon it.

* *Tuſc. Quæſt.* lib. 3.

† *Hiſt. Nat.* lib. 8. cap. 10.

Fourthly, Man's Life is ſhort, in Compariſon of thoſe many Days that moſt Men abide in *the Grave*, in the Land of Oblivion. *If a man live many days, and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkneſs, for they ſhall be many*, Eccl. xi. 8. many, very many, in reſpect of thoſe that were in this preſent Life. Wherefore the wiſe *Egyptians* call'd the Houſes of the Living ‡ *Inns*, where they are but a ſhort Time, but the Houſes of the Dead, *i. e.* the Sepulchers || *Everlaſting Habitations*: To which anſwers *Solomon*'s *Beth gnolam*, Eccl. xii. 5. which we tranſlate *Long home*.

‡ καταλύσεις. *Diodor. Sic.* lib. 1.

|| ἀϊδίους οἴκους. Ibid.

Fifthly, In Regard of *the Life to come*, this may well be ſaid to be ſhort. It is obſervable, that when the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks of the *Brevity* of Man's Life, he at the ſame Time takes Notice of *Eternity*, and particularly of God's endleſs and never-failing Duration, as in *Pſal.* cii. 11, 12, 23, 24, 25. and in *Pſal.* ciii. 15, 16, 17. mentioning both theſe together, to ſhew the vaſt and indefinite Difference between this fading Life, and that other which is to come. *Ariſtotle* makes mention of a ſort of Animals that live but a Day at moſt: Whereupon *Tully* hath this admirable Reflection, * 'Compare our Age, ſaith he, with Eternity, and 'we ſhall be found almoſt in the ſame State of Duration that 'thoſe Creatures are in.' The Earth in Compariſon of the Heavens is but a Point: So Man's Life compared with the Future one is but a Moment. Hear what the devout Pſalmiſt ſaith, *Mine age is as nothing before thee*, Pſal. xxxix. 5. In Mens Eyes it may perhaps ſeem long, but it is nothing in God's: For the ſame inſpired Writer tells us, That *a thouſand years in his ſight are but as yeſterday*, Pſal. xc. 4. and another Divine Author acquaints us, that with the Lord *a thouſand years are but as one day*. 2 Pet. iii. 8. If a Thouſand Years are ſo, then what is the Life of Man? And thus much for the *Comparative* Conſideration of the Words.

* *Confer noſtram longiſſimam ætatem cum æternitate, in eâdem propemodum brevitate quâ iſtæ beſtiolæ reperiemur.* Tuſc. Qu. *lib.* 1.

Secondly, Let's conſider Man's Life *Abſolutely*, and ſo likewiſe we ſhall find it to be exceeding ſhort. Here I might ſhew, that 'tis a great While before he lives, and he is a long time alive before he knows it, and underſtands where he is. And then, when he comes to live, and to be ſenſible of Life, the whole Work of Life may be ſaid to be diſpatch'd in a ſhort Compaſs. He doth, as it were, but live the ſame Life again: He returns to his former Employment, Eating, Working, Sleeping, with ſome other neceſſary Appendages of human Life. The whole Life of Man is tranſacted in the Space of Four and Twenty Hours: In the reſt he doth but tread the ſame Stage over and over. So that it is but a little of our Life that we may be ſaid to live.

But I will go another way to Work to demonſtrate the Abſolute Brevity and Uncertainty of humane Life. Man is made of diſcordant Elements, which jar and fall out with one another, and thereby procure his Diſſolution. So that 'tis no Wonder that he drops into the Grave ſo ſoon; but 'tis rather a Wonder that he holds out ſo long, and bears up againſt the Infirmities of his Nature, and the outward Caſualties which threaten his Overthrow. Oftentimes the firſt *Stamina* of the Body are faulty; ſome Perſons are born with Diſeaſes, and bring Death into the World with them, they deriving their Infirmities and Maladies from their Parents. However, the Frame of Man's Body, conſiſting of ſo many various Organs and Veſſels which may eaſily be diſorder'd and diſturb'd, is obnoxious to innumerable Hurts and Miſchiefs. Man's Strength is not the Strength of Stones, he is ſoon ſhatter'd and diſcompos'd. *Tamerlan*, the Great Emperor of the *Tartars*, and who was call'd the Terror of the World, was kill'd with Three Fits of an Ague. The Make of humane Bodies is eaſily diſſettled; they of their own Nature tend to Corruption. Which a late Writer had no Regard to, when he told the World, That * *If we examine the Compoſition of the Body, it will be very hard to find any good Reaſons why the Frame of it decays ſo ſoon.* But it is more rational to aſſert, that there are very great Reaſons why the *Compages* of the Body decays in ſo ſhort a Time. It is true we are not able to trace the ſeveral particular Changes that are in Men's Bodies, and to tell by what Steps and Degrees they are made; nor can we aſſign the particular and individual Times when theſe Alterations ſhall be. Some tell us of *Climacterick* Years, numbered by Sevens and Nines, of which the great and moſt famous one is *Sixty Three*, which hath prov'd fatal to the moſt eminent Perſons. Thus we are told by *Pamelius*, in the Life of *Tertullian*, that That Father died in his Grand Climacterick. So did *Ariſtotle*, *Demoſthenes*, *Cicero*: So did *Hanibal*, *Conſtantine* the Great, *Mahomet* the *Arabian* Impoſtor, and ſome ſay *Scanderbeg*. In this Year died venerable *Bede*, St. *Bernard*, *Eraſmus*, Cardinal *Cuſanus*, *Philip de Comines* the Hiſtorian, *Linacre*, *Stapleton*; and among the Reformed, *Martin Luther* and *Philip Melancthon*, and others of Note. This Year hath been accounted very dangerous, and therefore *Auguſtus Cæſar* expreſs'd a great deal of Joy when his Sixty Third Year was paſt, as † *Aulus Gellius* reports. It was *Seneca*'s Opinion, that ‡ every Seventh Year impreſſes ſome extraordinary Mark and Sign on a Man's Age. And there are ‖ ſeveral Writers that have voted the Heap of *Sevens* and *Nines*, which concentre in the *Great Climacterick*, to be very hazardous and pernicious. But I confeſs I am not a Proſelyte to this Opinion: I do not ſee any Ground why this Year of a Man's Life ſhould carry with it more Danger than ſome others. That ſome eminent Men have died then, is no ſufficient Argument, for in other Years as famous Perſons have expired, and far greater Numbers of them. This Notion ſeems to me to have had its Riſe from the *Obſervation* of the Number *Seven* of old. There hath been always among the *Ancients* a great Regard to this Number, and thence I conceive it is that the *Climactericks* have been diſcours'd of by ſome, and that it hath been thought that there is ſome more than ordinary Change in the Bodies of Men at that Time. Which ſeems to proceed from a ſuperſtitious Obſervation of the *Septenary* Number. But that there is continually a Change going on in humane Bodies, is to be freely acknowledg'd, which is the Thing that I have before aſſerted, and is the Foundation on which I ground the Brevity of Man's Life. Whether we perceive it or no, the Life of Man gradually decays. Yea, a very hail Plight of Body is the next Neighbour to Sickneſs and Diſeaſes. Health in its Extreme is ſoon attack'd, eſpecially when there are ſo many Squadrons of Diſeaſes and Maladies that we are liable to. Beſides, how many Caſualties and miſchievous Accidents

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* *Dr.* Burnet*'s Theory of the Earth.*

† Lib. 15. cap. 7.

‡ *Septimum quemque annum ætati ſignum imprimere. De Benefic.* Lib. 7. c. 6.

‖ *Jul. Firmic. Math.* lib. 4. *Cælius Rhodigin. Lect.* l. 21. *e.* 2. *Levin. Lemn. de Occult. Mir.* l. 2. c. 3.

ſurround us? Yea, how many periſh not only by the Malice of their Enemies, but by the Over-kindneſs and Officiouſneſs of their Friends?

Thirdly, Man's Life is thus ſhort by *the Juſt Judgment of God*. For upon *Adam*'s Sin a Curſe enter'd into the World, and fell on Mankind. They all reap the Fruit of that primitive Doom, *Surely thou ſhalt die the Death*. Particularly we read how the Earth was curſed, and from thence it were eaſy to prove how Men's Lives are hazarded, and Sickneſſes and Diſtempers invade Men's Bodies. This is a Truth which we derive only from the Holy Scriptures; the Heathen World, yea, the wiſeſt Philoſophers among them being wholly unacquainted with it, becauſe they were Strangers to thoſe Ancient Records. They had a Senſe of the general Corruption and Depravity of Mankind, (as their Writings teſtify;) but they had no expreſs Knowledge of the Original of it: They knew not that we had received a Contagion from our firſt Parents, and for their Sin were puniſh'd with a ſhort and dying Life.

Again, It is thus ſhort and contracted, not only by reaſon of *Adam*'s Sin, but of *our own*. Men's actual Follies do curtail their Lives; they cut ſhort the natural Period and Courſe of their Years by their vicious Behaviour. *For this Cauſe*, namely, the Prophaning of the Lord's Supper, *many are ſick and weak, and many ſleep*, 1 Cor. xi. 30. The Shortning of their Days, was the Penalty of their Sin. Nothing is more evident than this, that Sinners call down remarkable Judgments by their wilful Offences and Miſcarriages: Hence 'tis that Famine, Peſtilence, the Sword, and all manner of fatal Diſtreſſes overtake them.

Fourthly, Man's Life is Abbreviated *by the Mercy and Favour of God*. For 'tis uſual with the All-wiſe Diſpoſer of all Things to turn Curſes into Bleſſings, and Puniſhments into Kindneſſes. He is pleas'd to alleviate the Miſeries of Mankind by ſhortning their Lives; ſo that they may bleſs God that it is thus with them. We muſt know then, that this World was not intended by him as a Place of Repoſe and Reſidence for us: It was deſign'd to be but a Stage for a Time, and when one Generation have acted their Part, it muſt paſs off, and make Way for others to come on, and tread the ſame Stage. *We have here no abiding city:* It is the New Jeruſalem alone *that hath Foundations*, and therefore is permanent and durable. We are Pilgrims here, and are on our Journey to our Country: But we ſhould be quite tir'd if our Paſſage were long and tedious. To live always on Earth would be toilſome and intollerable. If Men ſhould now live Six Hundred Years, ſaith the famous *Cardan*, they would be weary of it, and they would attempt even thro' Deſpair to put an End to their Days. Life, in the Circumſtances we now are, would be a heavy Burden, and Men would be glad to be rid of it. Therefore God hath been pleaſed to contract Man's Life, that he may not do it himſelf. It is a great Kindneſs to the Chriſtian Warriour that he is not kept here long on the forlorn Hope, that he hath his Captain's Leave to march off, and quit this dangerous Field. Beſides, I might add this, that the Brevity of Life may be conducible to the ſpeedy Repentance of Mankind: For ſeeing they are not to continue here a long Time, it is their Concern to ſet about this great and important Work betimes, and not to defer it till Life is almoſt exhauſted and ſpent. But this I ſhall further urge in the *Application* of all, which I ſhall proceed to, after I have briefly reminded you of what hath been ſaid under this *Laſt general Head*. You ſee what are the *True Reaſons* and *Cauſes* of the Shortneſs of Man's Life. Theſe ſeveral Things concur to make our Days few, The Appointment of Heaven, the Nature and Make of mortal Man, original and actual Sin, the Curſe of God, yea and his Mercy and Favour. All theſe give us an Account of the Brevity of humane Life.

Now, to *Apply* the whole, Firſt, be thoroughly convinc'd of this Truth, and often revolve it in your Minds. After we have weather'd out a few Years, we muſt return to the Duſt whence we were taken. This σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου, (as the Apoſtle calls it,) this *Shew of the World* is paſſing away, this *Play* is tending to its laſt Act: The Muſick and Dancing, the Mirth and the Foolery, and all the antick Guiſes, and the Laughing and the Mumming laſte but for a

Time: The *Epilogue* is ready to be ſpoken, and the *Curtain* is now going to be let down; and you muſt quit your Stations tho' you were never ſo conveniently placed, and were mightily taken with the Hiſtrionical Sport, and applauded the Actors, and were applauded your ſelves. Indeed this is the frank Acknowledgment of all Perſons, and there is no voting againſt the common Suffrage of Mankind, and the univerſal Experience of the World. But that which I urge upon you now is, that you would *ſeriouſly think* of this Doctrine, and ponder it in your Minds, ſo that it may prove effectual to you.

Again, Complain not of the Shortneſs of Life. God, the abſolute Controller of the World and all Things in it, hath ſet you your Bounds, and you ought not to murmur and repine at his Appointment. We read ‖ that *Xerxes* the Emperor of *Perſia*, ſhed Abundance of Tears, when he thought of the ſhort Stage Man is to run here, and that in his vaſt and numerous Army not one Man ſhould be ſurviving ſome Years after. It was unbecoming a Great Man to behave himſelf after this Manner, eſpecially when he took a Courſe to ſend his Soldiers out of the World apace. But it is childiſh and fooliſh in any Perſons to bemoan themſelves for the Contractedneſs of their Lives, and to wiſh for a longer Extent of them. It was excellently ſpoken by *Xenophon* concerning his Son *Gryllus*, who died when he was a young Man, "* He is not a happy Man, ſaith he, "who attains to a long Life, but he on whom God beſtows a ſhort one. So it be accompanied with Vertue and "Goodneſs." And hear what that brave *Latin* Moraliſt ſaith, † "There is nothing more ſhameful and baſe than "that Man who reckons upon his Years wholly, and hath "no other Proof of his long Life than that he hath been in "the World ſo many Years." And he tells us in another Place, that a wiſe Man concerns not himſelf in the Length, but in the Goodneſs of his Life: ‡ "He minds not how "*long*, but how *well* he lives." If he hath liv'd to underſtand his Duty, and to practiſe it, he accounts it enough. It was an ingenious Thought of a learned Writer, ‖ "We "ſhall riſe in the perfect Stature of Men: To be older, and live here longer, "is but to be retrograde, and run back ſo many Years as we have paſs'd and "have out-liv'd that perfect Period of Age, which he accounts to be between "Forty and Fifty." Thus this witty Man wou'd divert us from affecting a long-ſpun Life, and bring us to be contented with a moderate Share of Living. Whether his Notion be exact or not, this we are *certain* of, that no Man ought to trouble his Head that he ſhall not live long, but this ſhould trouble him that his Life is ill ſpent. This then is the main Thing that we are to mind, namely, to live whilſt we do live: For Life is to be meaſur'd not by Years, but by Goodneſs. And that leads me to the *next Inference*, which is this,

Make this Doctrine of the Brevity of Life ſerviceable to all holy and religious Purpoſes: Improve it to the beſt and nobleſt Ends. As,

1. Make uſe of it to check your immoderate and extravagant Purſuits after this World. Seeing Life is ſhort and uncertain, how abſurd a Thing is it for a Man to behave himſelf as if he ſhould live for ever? This prevailing Vanity was taken Notice of by the Pſalmiſt; he mentions a Sort of Men that *truſted in their wealth, and boaſted themſelves in the multitude of their riches*, and fancied that *they ſhould live for ever, and not ſee corruption*; *their inward thought was that their houſes ſhould continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations*, Pſal. xlix. 6, 9, 11. They promiſe themſelves a kind of Immortality here on Earth, which cauſes them to put by all Reflections on Death, and to thruſt away all Thoughts of their latter End, and eagerly to purſue after Wealth and worldly Gain. Their Language is not unlike his in the Parable, *Soul, thou haſt much goods laid up for many years: take thine eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry*, Luke xii. 19. indulge thy ſelf in all worldly and ſenſual Pleaſures, and think not of leaving this World. But how ſoon is this vain Preſumption quaſh'd? *This Night his Soul is taken from him*, and he deſcends into the

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‖ *Val. Max.* l. 9. c. 13.

* Μακάριος ὅστις οὐ τὸ μήκιστον ἑλόμενος τοῦ βίου, τὸ δὲ μετ' ἀρετῆς καὶ εἰ βραχὺν δὲ ἔδωκεν αἰῶνα ὁ θεός. *Fragm. Epiſt.*

† *Nihil turpius eſt quàm grandis natu ſenex, qui nullum aliud habet argumentum, quo ſe probet diu vixiſſe, præter Ætatem.* Sen. de Tranquil. *lib.* 1.

‡ *Cogitat ſemper qualis vita, non quanta.* Epiſt. 71.

‖ Brown's *Relig. Med.*

Grave, leaving behind him what he deem'd to be his Happineſs, and therefore he is capable of no other now, for this World was his God, and this Earth was his Heaven. Can there be a greater Inſtance of Folly than this Wretch? What can juſtify ſuch preſumptuous Projects as we ſee the Men of the World are guilty of? Why are they ſo fierce and zealous in their Proſecutions, and lay ſuch long Plots for Gain and Greatneſs, ſeeing their Lives are confined within ſo narrow a Compaſs, which teaches them to * ſtint their Deſires, Longings, and Contrivances?

2. Life being ſo ſhort, let us by no Means defer our Repentance, but betake our ſelves forthwith to a ſtrict and religious Life. Let us ſtrive to affect our Hearts with a ſerious Reflection on our Ways, and let a thorough Remorſe poſſeſs our Souls for our paſt Diſobedience. Let a deep and laſting Regret of Mind ſeize upon us for our vile and unworthy Behaviour, and let us abandon our moſt pleaſurable Sins, and our moſt profitable Vices, and never entertain them again, unleſs it be in our penitent Reſolves never to approve of them. There cannot be a more forcible Motive to ſpeedy Repentance than this; eſpecially if ſome of us remember that the Time paſt of our Life may ſuffice us to have wrought the Will of Satan, when we walk'd in our Luſts and Vanities, and there being now but little Time left us, 'tis our Intereſt to improve the Remains of it with extraordinary Diligence and Application, and to be exceeding careful how we ſpend our Hours. How earneſtly ſhould we mind our eternal State, and prepare for Death, which is the Entrance into it?

Towards the Cloſe of all, let me offer this *one Conſideration* to you, to encourage you to the Practice of what I have commended to you. Conſider this, that by this Means you may in ſome Manner cure that *Brevity of Life* which I have been ſpeaking of, and you may happily prolong your Days. An † intelligent Writer hath obſerv'd, (and hath made good his Obſervation) that religious and holy Exerciſes, the Study and Contemplation of God and Holineſs conduce much to the Prolonging of Life; and he inſtances in the old *Aſcetick* and *Retired* Perſons, which Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory makes mention of. We may then contribute to the Number of our Days, by exerciſing our ſelves in Devotion, by retiring from the Croud, and dedicating ourſelves to God and his Service. We may render our Life hail, and our Days numerous by abandoning the Follies of the World, and keeping ourſelves unſpotted from them. On the contrary, a vitious Life doth frequently bring with it Fewneſs of Years. The Drunkards unſteady and trembling Hand oftentimes ſhakes his Hour-glaſs, and makes it run the faſter. How often do Lewdneſs and Incontinence ſhorten Mens Days, and unchaſte Beds make Way for their Winding-ſheets? Do not Envy and Malice, do not exceſſive Wrath and Choler prey upon the Bodies of Men, and hurry them to their Graves? And I might inſtance in other Vices and Enormities which are deſtructive to the Life of Man. Whereas, on the contrary, Temperance and Chaſtity, Love and Good-will, and Baniſhing of all exorbitant Paſſion, do wonderfully contribute toward the Extending of the Limits of humane Life, and chaſing away of Diſeaſes and Mortality. All Godlineſs and Honeſty are Preſervatives of Life and Health. *Solomon*, if he ſpoke only like a Philoſopher, was in the right when he ſaid, that *the fear of the Lord prolongeth days*, Prov. x. 27. and again in Prov. xxi. 21. *He that followeth after righteouſneſs and mercy, findeth life.*

Many have writ concerning the *Prolongation of Life*, and it is the proper Work of the Maſters of *Medicks* to ſtudy this Point. But ſome are very fond and conceited in their Notions of this Matter. The Brethren of the *Roſy-Croſs* talk after a ſtrange Rate, and boaſt of their Skill in this Affair. *Paracelſus* pretended to make a Man immortal. It is ſaid Mr. *Hobbes* complain'd that he had not ſoon enough acquainted himſelf with the Nature of Herbs, whereby he could have hop'd to have ſpun out his Life to a vaſt Length. But theſe are falſe Hopes and Deluſions, yea they have been acknowledg'd to be ſuch by the very Artiſts themſelves. After all their Studies and Endeavours, that leading Aphoriſm of *Hippocrates* holds true, *Life is ſhort, tho' Art be long and*

* *Longa noſtra deſideria increpat vita brevis.* Sen.

† D. *Verulam de vitâ prolongandâ.*

tedious. But if there be any Way to prevent this, I have now aſſign'd it; the true Way of Lengthning our Lives is to live religiouſly, for this both in the Nature of the Thing itſelf, and by the Bleſſing of the moſt High, conduces to the Protracting of our Days.

But if the All-wiſe God ſhall be pleaſed to cut ſhort the Thread of our Lives, yet this we are to remember, that a *godly Life*, a Life ſpent religiouſly and uprightly, is in the Account of God and all wiſe Men, a *long Life.* This is implied in thoſe remarkable Words of the Prophet *Iſaiah*, Chap. lxv. *v.* 20. *There ſhall be no more an infant or old man that hath not fill'd his days, for the child ſhall die an hundred years old.* That is, they ſhall all *fill* their Days by Living well. They are *empty* Days that are paſs'd in Sin: But Vertue and Goodneſs *fill them up*, and compleat them. And ſo tho' ſome die in their early Years, yet they are reckon'd to live long. Thus a Child dies a Hundred Years old. Whereas, a hardned Sinner, one of a Hundred Years old, is reputed by God not to have liv'd at all, that is, he hath not liv'd to any Purpoſe, he hath not anſwer'd the true Ends of Life. I could obſerve that he or ſhe that is not of Age, is an *Infant* in the Language and Conſtruction of our *Law. Underſtanding* and *Reaſon* make *Years*; and thoſe Years are not accompted which precede Wiſdom and Diſcretion. Excellently ſpeaks the Apocryphal Writer, *Wiſd.* iv. 8. *Honourable age is not that which ſtandeth in length of time, nor that is meaſured by number of years: but wiſdom is the grey hair unto men, and an unſpotted life is old age.* You ſee then the Way to lengthen your Lives. Live well, and you live long. And with this Author concur the wiſeſt Maſters of Morals among the Gentiles, as *Plutarch*, who owns that * *Goodneſs, not Length of Time, is the Meaſure of Man's Life:* And again, † *The longeſt Life is not the moſt eligible, but the moſt vertuous.* An other Great Moraliſt, ſpeaking of the Life of Man, bids us reckon it ‡ *by Action, and not by Time.* And again, ‖ *Life* (ſaith he) *is long enough, if a Man knows how to uſe it*, if he hath Skill to employ it. If it were all of it laid out well, it would be of ſufficient Length. And therefore the ſame excellent Perſon ſays again, * If a Man's Life be *fill'd up* with his Duty, the Extent of it is *Large.*

I could ſhew yet further on an other Account, that *Living well* is a *Prolonging of Life:* For if a Man can truly and ſincerely take up *Cato's* Words, † *I am not aſhamed of my paſt Life, I have no Regret on me for what I have done, for I have ſo lived, that I think my Life hath been to ſome good Purpoſes in this World*; if he can thus ſit down and reflect on his Actions, it will be an unſpeakable Satiſfaction to him: And this will be a *Doubling* of his Life.

Vivere bis, vitâ poſſe priore frui.

A vertuous and good Man lives his Life twice over, if he can look back on his paſt Days with Comfort and Joy. And there is no Way to do this, but by keeping a good Conſcience and faithfully adhering to his Duty.

And moreover, this is the Way to live, after this ſhort Life, in the Hearts and Memory and Lips of good Men. Holineſs will render a Man's Name precious and honourable. By this he lives here after Death, and ſurvives his Funeral. Thus it is plain, that this is the beſt Courſe we can take to help the Shortneſs of Life, and to protract our Years to the greateſt Length.

And ſo I have finiſh'd what I deſign'd, namely, to ſhew how we are to improve the Brevity of Life to religious and holy Purpoſes; and therefore I think I have juſtly reckon'd this among the *Helps* that are conducing thereunto.

THE

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* Μέτρον γὰρ τοῦ βίου τὸ καλὸν, οὐ τὸ χρόνου μῆκος. *De Conſolat. ad Apollon.*

† Οὐχ ὁ μακρότατος βίος ἄριστος, ἀλλ' ὁ σπουδαιότατος. *Ibid.*

‡ *Actu illam metiamur, non Tempore.* Sen. Epiſt. 94.

‖ *Vita, ſi ſcias uti, longa eſt.* De Brev. Vitæ.

* *Longa eſt vita, ſi Plena eſt.* Ep. 94.

† *Non me vixiſſe pœnitet, quoniam ita vixi ut non fruſtra me natum exiſtimem,* &c. De Senectute.

THE
Certainty of DEATH.

Psal. lxxxix. 48.

What man is he that liveth, and ſhall not ſee death? ſhall he deliver his ſoul from the hand of the grave?

THIS Text preſents you with a very common and known Subject. Every Man is ready to preach a Sermon of *Mortality* to himſelf and others. *We muſt all die* is the vulgar Confeſſion, and thoſe that differ in many other Propoſitions, yet unanimouſly agree in this. But yet we ſee this Doctrine hath but little Effect on the Minds of Men. Their Mouths ſpeak it, their Lips pronounce it, but their Hearts and Conſciences are little affected with it. And yet it is moſt certain, that this is a Theme which might be of admirable Uſe in the Life of Man. If it were ſeriouſly conſidered of, and frequently meditated on, it would be of unſpeakable Advantage to us. If Men did deliberately and in good Earneſt preſs this on their Minds, and imprint it on their Memories, that they muſt leave all their worldly Pleaſures and Profits, that they muſt bid farewel to all their earthly Poſſeſſions and Enjoyments, and paſs into an other State, where they muſt be called to an Account for all that they ſaid, or thought, or did here, this certainly would make a very great Change in their Lives. This is the excellent Advantage of this Doctrine: And though there are very few that experience this, yet I hope I ſhall at this Time be inſtrumental to add ſome to the Number of thoſe who have been benefitted by this great, but common Truth. To which Purpoſe I will deſignedly dwell on this Subject: And whilſt I do ſo, let me have your Attention, and your hearty Prayers, (as you have mine) that God would vouchſafe to direct and aſſiſt us by his holy Spirit in the Treating and Hearing of ſo important and weighty a Truth.

The Propoſition is this, That no Perſon whatſoever is priviledged from the Stroke of Death: Or thus, It is the common Doom of all Mankind that they muſt depart, and leave this World. We are told by *Solomon*, Eccl. viii. 8. that *There is no man that hath power over the Spirit, to retain the Spirit*, (*i. e.* the Breath of Life, or his Soul) *nor hath he power in the day of death*, *i. e.* when his appointed Time comes, he can by no Means reſiſt it; when God requires his Soul, he muſt give it up. And he adds, *There is no diſcharge in that war*, there is no Diſmiſſion from it. This Warfare muſt ſtill go on, Death will certainly get the Conqueſt. From the infallible Apoſtle likewiſe we are taught that *It is appointed to all men once to die*, Rom. v. 14. Death is the beaten Road of all Mankind: Is is * *the way of all fleſh*. And yet this is not ſaid altogether without *Exception*, or *Qualification* at leaſt. We read of two Perſons that were exempted from Death, and but two, namely, *Enoch* and *Elias*: Theſe never died, but were tranſlated, and taken up to Heaven. Theſe may be ſaid to be *changed* (as thoſe * Faithful that ſhall be found alive at our Saviour's laſt Coming); or in a general Way of ſpeaking even theſe may be ſaid to *die*, becauſe Death itſelf is a *Change* (as *Job* ſtiles it), and becauſe upon this Change they are altered from what they were, they paſs from this preſent State to an other, which is effected by Dying. Or if this doth not ſatisfy, then we ſay that the grand Sentence is, that All ſhall *die* (*properly* and *ſtrictly* ſo ſpeaking), and that though there be an *Exemption* of two Perſons (and no others beſides them), this doth not make void the general Doom, this doth not anul the Community and Uuiverſality of the Stroke, for a ſingle Pair is not conſiderable, yea, may be ſaid to be none if compared with the reſt of Mankind who all feel the Stroke of *Death*. So it is ſaid in the forementioned Place that it is appointed to all Men *once* to die, and yet we know that ſome have died *twice*, as *Lazarus* and *Jairus*'s Daughter, and others that were miraculouſly raiſed from the Dead, and afterwards underwent Death at their laſt Exit out of the World. Notwithſtanding this, it is truly ſaid all Men *die once*, *i. e.* if we ſpeak of the Generality of Mankind, it is but once that their Souls and Bodies are ſeparated: And the few Examples to the contrary do not hinder the Propoſition from being univerſal. So in the preſent Caſe, though a few ſhall undergo a *Change*, yet becauſe that ſmall Number is as none in Reſpect of the reſt, the Aſſertion holds good that Death is the Allotment of all Mankind. Here I will 1. *Illuſtrate* this Point. 2. I will aſſign the *Reaſons* of it. 3. I will ſhew what are the proper *Inferences* that may be made from it. That this known and confeſſed Truth may the more effectually be repreſented to your Minds, and that it may influence on your Practice, I will illuſtrate it in theſe following Particulars.

* Joſh. xxiii. 14.

* 1 Cor. xv. 51.

1. Both *Good* and *Bad* are promiſcuouſly taken away by Death. This (as all Things elſe) *comes alike to the righteous and to the wicked, to the good and to the clean, and unto the unclean: to him that ſacrificeth, and to him that ſacrificeth not: as is the good ſo is the ſinner: and he that ſweareth as he that feareth an oath*, Eccl. ix. 2. No Gifts and Accompliſhments of Grace, no Endowments of the holy Spirit can prevail with this ſurly Executioner, and hinder him from doing his Office. The holy Patriarchs, the Prophets and Apoſtles, as well as the wicked Contemners of God and of all Religion, ſubmit to this Sentence. Meek *Moſes*, faithful *Abraham*, patient *Job*, as well as bloody *Cain*, uſurping *Nimrod*, curſed *Cham*, obey the Summons of Death.

The Reaſon is plain, becauſe both the Righteous and Wicked are by Death to paſs into an other State, the one into the everlaſting Life of Glory, the other into eternal Miſery. Thence it is that they are equally liable to the Laws and Decrees of Mortality. The *Corn* and the *Tares* ſtanding and growing on the ſame Ground, are mowed down together at the Harveſt.

2. Death ſpares no *Rank*, no *Condition* of Men. Kings as well as Subjects, Princes as well as the meaneſt Ruſticks are liable to this fatal Stroke. The lofty Cedars and low Shrubs; Palaces and Cottages are alike here. Indeed we read that *Julius Cæſar* bid the Maſter of the Ship, wherein he was ſailing, take Courage notwithſtanding the boiſterous Tempeſt, becauſe he had *Cæſar and his Fortune embarked in his Veſſel*, as much as to ſay, the Element on which they then were could not prove fatal to an Emperour, to ſo great a one as he was. Our

William ſurnamed *Rufus* ſaid, he never heard of a *King* that was drown'd. And *Charles* the Fifth, at the Battle of *Tunis*, being adviſ'd to retire when the Great Ordnance began to play, told 'em that it was never known that an Emperor was ſlain with great Shot, and ſo ruſh'd into the Battle. But this we are ſure of, it was never known or heard that any King or Crown'd Head eſcaped the Blow of Death at laſt. The Scepter cannot keep off the Arrows that fly by Day, and the Sickneſs which waſtes at Noon-day; it is no Skreen, no Guard againſt the Shafts of Death. We have heard of great Tyrants and Uſurpers who vaunted that they had the Power of Life and Death, and as abſolutely diſpoſed of Men as *Domitian* did of Flies; but we have heard likewiſe that in a ſhort Time (and generally the *ſhorter*, the more furious they have been) their Scepters are fallen out of their Hands, their Crowns are toppled off their Heads, and they are themſelves ſnatched away by the King of Terrours. Or, if we ſpeak of thoſe royal Perſonages that are mild and gentle, and like *Veſpaſian* are the Darlings and Delight of the People, yet theſe no leſs than others have their fatal Hour, and their regal Honour and Majeſty are laid in the Duſt. *The King doth not die*, may be a *Common-Law Maxim*, but it is a Falſehood according to the *Laws of God and Nature*, and the eſtabliſhed Conſtitution of Heaven. For God himſelf who hath ſaid, *Ye are Gods*, hath alſo added, *Ye ſhall die like Men*. In the *Eſcurial*, the Palace of the Kings of *Spain*, is their *Cœmetery* too; there their royal Aſhes lie. So in the Place where the Kings and Queens of *England* are crowned, their Predeceſſors are entombed: To tell them, as it were, that their Crowns exempt them not from the Grave, and that there is no Greatneſs and Splendor that can guard them from the Arreſt of Death. He regards the Rich and Wealthy no more than the Poor and Neceſſitous: He ſnatches Perſons out of their Manſion-Houſes and hereditary Seats, as well as out of Almshouſes and Hoſpitals. His Dominion is over Maſters as well as Servants, Parents as well as Children, Superiours as well as Inferiours.

Again, Under this Head I may add, that neither *Celibacy* nor the *married Life* are any Diſcharge from Mortality. Whether it be a ſingle or conjugal State that you are in, know this that you can plead no Freedom in this Caſe. Virgins are cropt by Death, the Grave defrauds the Marriage Bed. Queen *Mary* and Queen *Elizabeth* lie buried in the ſame Vault. The Lady *Mary* St. *Paul* was (as one expreſſes it) a Maid, Wife, and Widow all in one Day, her Husband the Lord St. *Paul* being unhappily ſlain at a Tilting on the Day of his Nuptials, which was the Occaſion of her erecting, and founding a College in Cambridge. The *Hebrew* Doctors have this proverbial Saying, *The Bride goes into her Chamber, and knows not what ſhall happen to her there.* She may die before ſhe comes forth, and the Nuptial Rites may be turned into thoſe of a Funeral. Among the *Romans* the ſame Goddeſs (*viz. Venus*, with an other Name, *Libitina*,) was Preſident of *Funerals* and *Marriages*. And *Plutarch* ſpeaks of a *Sepulchral Venus*, and tells us her Image was at *Delphi*. You may obſerve that thoſe ſeaſonable Words of the Apoſtle, *The time is ſhort*, and *the faſhion of this world paſſeth away*, which is as much as to ſay, Death is approaching, are inſerted into a Diſcourſe of *Marriage*, for the whole vii*th* Chapter of the Firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians* is ſuch. As if the Apoſtle would acquaint us how properly theſe two are joined together, Death and Marriage. He would remind thoſe intimate Relatives of parting with one an other, and of being content to abandon their mutual Embraces, and to deſcend into the Regions of Mortality.

3. As Death ſpares no *Condition*, ſo no *Calling* or *Profeſſion* of Men whatſoever. *The Prophets, do they live for ever?* Zach. i. 5. No: They mingle their Duſt with that of others, and are conſigned to Stench and Rottenneſs. Thoſe of the ſacred Function, whoſe Office it is to prepare others for Death, muſt pay their Homage to it themſelves. *Divines* are not priviledged from this common Lot of Humanity, and have no Benefit of their Clergy here. The greateſt *Students*, who are daily converſing with the Dead now, *i. e.* with their Writings, muſt ſhortly be gathered to the Deceaſed themſelves. The learnedeſt Heads muſt lie level with thoſe of Clowns and Idiots. Thoſe great Devourers of Books muſt be fed upon by Worms. The *Muſes* give no Pro-

tection againſt the *fatal Siſters.* There is none of the Arts and Sciences pretends to this Accompliſhment. Within one little Spot of Ground you find thoſe great Princes of *Engliſh Poetry Chaucer*, *Draiton*, *Spencer*, and *Cowley* interred together: Only they (above others of their Brethren) have the Honour to ſleep near our Kings; and their Bays and Lawrels are mixed with royal Crowns. The *mathematick* Brain, amidſt all its Contrivances hath found none to exempt the Students of that Art from the Force of that which by *Horace* is called *ultima linea rerum.* Yea, *Archimedes*, whilſt he was drawing of Lines and Circles, loſt his Life. His Brains where daſhed out, whilſt he was beating them about Demonſtrations. The *Philoſophers* talk of *Immortality*, but acknowledge *Death* to be the Way to it. The *Warriours*, who are briſk in diſpatching others, fall a Victim themſelves to the common Foe of Mankind. Thoſe bold Men that pretend to *foretel others Deſtinies* and the ſet Periods of their Lives, cannot prevent their own. Some *Roſy-Crucians* boaſt that they can prolong Life, and renew Youth, but they have not the Confidence to aſſure any Man of Immortality in this Life. The ambitious *Courtier* who hath purſued Honour and Preferment all his Lifetime, yet with climbing high he breathes ſhort, and ſoon expires. The *Phyſician* himſelf who keeps Diſeaſes and Death in awe as it were, in a few Years lets the World know that he is a mere Mortal. And ſo if we ſhould particularly enumerate the Perſons of *other Employments and Callings*, we ſhould ſee that none of them give them a Diſcharge from Death.

4. Death is favourable to no Age. Sometimes the Infant is no ſooner ſet free from his dark Priſon, but preſently he is ſent to a darker Confinement, the Grave. But if theſe tender Flowers be not forthwith blaſted, but live to be placed in their Mothers Boſoms, then even there they wither and fade. But ſuppoſe that theſe little Ones arrive to Youth, and are very gay, and give great Hopes of continuing ſo, yet there is no Certainty of Health and Life; for How often do we ſee them cut down in their blooming and youthful Years? Some reach to Manhood, and the Hopes of their Friends and Parents are now confirmed, and they rejoyce to ſee the Thread of their Lives ſpun out to ſo great a Length. But behold! On a ſudden this manly Age hath its Period, and this ripe Fruit is gathered at its full Growth. Others are indulged a greater Extent of Life, and live to be called Old. Then this declining Fruit drops of itſelf, and falls into the Grave. Thus both Old and Young ſubmit to the Edict of Mortality. The Former may be ſaid to go to Death, but Death comes to the Latter, and comes as frequently as to the other. For the Lamp of Life is as often blown out as it goes out of itſelf, being ſpent and exhauſted. Hence it is that thoſe of few Years die as well as others. But this is certain that * Death obſerves no Order; the Young and the Aged are taken hence promiſcuouſly. *Death keeps no Kalendar*, nor reckons up the Number of Mens Years. *Non citamur ex cenſu, nec exigitur numerus annorum*, as *Seneca* ſaith rightly, Death goes not by the Church-Book, nor looks into the Date of Mens Lives. The *Jews* have a proverbial Saying to this Purpoſe, *There are many old Camels that are loaded with the Skins of the young Camels:* By which they mean no other than this, that many that are youthful die before thoſe that are aged.

5. Death makes no Difference between *Sexes*. *Abraham* and *Sarah*, *Iſaac* and *Rebecca*, *Jacob* and *Rachel*, *Elkanah* and *Hannah* equally ſubmit to the Laws of Fate. Look into the Bills of Mortality, conſult the Regiſters of the Dead, and though perhaps you'll find (as a late Obſerver tells us) the Number of the other Sex that dies is leſs than that of Men, becauſe (as he gives the Reaſon) there are fewer of them in the World, yet you can never obſerve that either Kind are ſpared, and that any of them are exempted out of the common Fate of the World. The weaker Sex is *more* liable to Mortality on ſome Accounts, eſpecially becauſe of the Danger of Child-bearing, which is proper to them. How many pregnant Mothers have been ſent out of the World whilſt they delivered up their Infants into it? The Friends have oftentimes been bringing the Child to the Font, and the Mother to the Grave about the ſame Time. The Water and Earth were both employed: Baptiſm and

Burial

* *Non eſt idem ordo fati qui & ætatis.* Sen.

Burial were together. This ſhould be thought of ſeriouſly by all teeming Mothers: They ought to prepare for their Funeral and Bringing forth together. Seeing the one oftentimes attends the other, they are to be mindful of both. Whilſt they give Life to the Babe, they may taſte of Death themſelves: And ſometimes they are both delivered into the other World by the fatal Midwifery of Death. Thoſe then that are Childbearing Women are (above all other Perſons) concerned to fit themſelves for their latter End: There is a particular Reaſon proper to their Condition which invites them to be mindful of, and provide themſelves for their Departure hence. They converſe with Death, and approach to the Confines of it oftner than others: Therefore they are to live in a conſtant Preparation for it. But though this be their peculiar Concern, yet all Perſons of *either* Sex are to remember, that upon other Accounts they are daily obnoxious to this deadly Foe. He is not wont to diſtinguiſh between Male and Female: He at one Seaſon or other fetches them into his Snare, and involves them in a Deſtruction common to all.

6. To evince the univerſal Sway and Dominion of Death, we may conſider that there is no *Place* where it doth not, and cannot enter. We read that it attacked *Abel* in the Field, *Eli* on a Seat by the Way-ſide, *Sennacherib* in his Idol Temple. It violently ſeized on *Joaſh* and ſlew him on his Bed, *Eglon* in his Parlour, *Joab* at the Altar, *Zacharias* between the Temple and the Altar. It fell upon the Infants of *Bethlehem* in their Cradles, or at their Mothers Breaſts, and it encountered *Herod* on his Throne. Some have been ſeized at the Plough, ſome in the Streets, others in their Shops, ſome in the Market, others in their Cloſets and Retirements, as that famous Mathematician beforementioned, who whilſt he was hard at his Study, making of Diagrams, was killed by a rude Soldier, who broke in upon him when *Syracuſe* was taken. He breathed out his laſt over his Figures, and died wallowing in his mathematick Duſt. It appears then that there is no *priviledged Place* where this Officer cannot arreſt us, and conſequently we are every where at his Diſpoſal.

7thly and *Laſtly*, There is no *Time*, or any *other Circumſtance* of our Life which is not obnoxious to Death, Winter and Summer, Spring and Autumn; Seed-Time and Harveſt, the cold Seaſons and the hot ones, and thoſe which are more moderate, are made Uſe of by this Deſtroyer. In the Day and in the Night, in the Morning and in the Evening, in Times ſet for Devotion, or for worldly Buſineſs; in Time of Work or Recreation, in Times of Calamity and Proſperity this Enemy invades us. *Lot*'s Wife was ſtruck as ſhe was travelling from *Sodom*; *Nadab* and *Abihu* whilſt they were offering; *Zimri* and *Coſbi* in their Luſt. The Lords of the *Philiſtines* died as they were ſporting, *Amnon* as he was at a Feaſt, *Abner* complimenting, *Jezabel* painting herſelf. And *prophane* Story furniſhes us with odd Poſtures of dying Men: *Veſpaſian* with a Jeſt in his Mouth, *Auguſtus* (as *Abner*) in a Compliment. *Lucan* died rehearſing ſome of his own Verſes. *Sardanapalus* was ſlain in the Midſt of his Concubines. The *Egyptian* Slaves were wearied out in building the Pyramids: They found their own Graves, whilſt they were erecting Sepulchres and Tombs for others. Thus whatever men are ſaying or doing, however they are diſpoſed or employed, Death interrupts them.

And now I have finiſhed the firſt Thing I deſigned, which was to give you ſome *particular Remembrances* of what you all know and confeſs, that the Stroke of Death is impartial and univerſal. Which I have evidenced to you, by letting you ſee that all Ranks and Conditions, all Profeſſions and States of Men, every Age, Sex, Place, and Time are at the Beck and Command of this great King of Terrours. Death is no Reſpecter of Perſons, he ſtrikes with an indifferent Hand. As he favours none, ſo he fears none. Neither *Goliah*'s Strength, nor *Abſalom*'s Beauty, nor *Achitophel*'s Wiſdom, nor *David*'s Piety, prevail with this impartial Invader of Mankind. *We ſee that wiſe men die, likewiſe the fool and the brutiſh perſon periſh*, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, *Pſal.* xlix. 10. In brief, this Catholick Deſtroyer regards the Qualities of none, he takes in all into his fatal Embraces, and permits none to plead any Diſpenſation.

In the next Place, let us enquire into the particular *Reaſons* of this univerſal Sway of Death in the World. And this Enquiry will be very uſeful to us, becauſe thereby we ſhall ſatisfy ourſelves concerning the Accountableneſs and Equity of the divine Diſpenſations in the World, we ſhall ſee that this particular one is agreeable to the Frame of Things which God hath conſtituted, and we ſhall be able thence to fortify our Minds with Patience and Content, and to bring ourſelves to ſuch a Temper as becomes this Order and Appointment in the World. We ſhall not Wonder that no Man is exempted from Death, if we conſider 1. The *divine Decree.* 2. The Entrance of *Sin* into the World. 3. The *Curſe* which followed it.

Firſt, Death is univerſal becauſe the *divine Decrees* have ſo ordained it. *The grave is the houſe appointed for all living*, Job xxx. 23. And the Apoſtle acquaints us that *it is appointed to all men once to die*, it is an Ordinance of Heaven, and therefore muſt take Place, and cannot be reverſed. As God hath decreed all other Things, *i. e.* hath eſtabliſhed from Eternity by his All-wiſe and Soveraign Pleaſure, the ſeveral States and Conditions of Men in the World, ſo he hath particularly predetermined their Departure out of it. It ſeemed good to his divine Wiſdom to order that there ſhould be a ſucceſſive Series of Perſons on the Earth, and not that one conſtant Number ſhould monopolize the World. He that knew beſt the Diſpoſition of thoſe Creatures he was to make, he that underſtood the Condition of human Nature, he that was acquainted with the Neceſſities of Mankind, he that was conſcious to the Methods of his own Providence, ordained that there ſhould not be always the ſame Actors on the Stage of the World, but that whilſt ſome are ſtepping upon it, others ſhall go off, and make Way for them. This is the divine Appointment, and that is ſufficient to render it rational and equitable.

Secondly, *Sin* brought *Death* into the World, and thence it is that all Mankind are ſubject to it. It is no Wonder that all die ſeeing they are all from *Adam*, againſt whom Death was threatened by God if he revolted from him. And we read that he did ſo, and accordingly all his Race are become mortal. There can be nothing clearer than this, for the Apoſtle poſitively, and in plain Terms, aſſures us that *by one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin, and ſo death paſſed on all men for that all have ſinned*, Rom. v. 12. And again, *chap.* viii. *v.* 10. *The body is dead becauſe of ſin*, *i. e.* our Bodies are liable to Mortality, and return to Duſt by Reaſon of the firſt and original Tranſgreſſion of Man. Our firſt Parents and all their Poſterity had been immortal, *i. e.* had never known what Death is, if they had not wilfully diſobeyed the divine Command in Paradiſe. But it was by this alone that they brought down the Sentence of Mortality upon themſelves, and their whole Offspring. Which is thus expreſſed by the Author of the Book *of Wiſdom, chap.* ii. *v.* 23. *God created man to be immortal: nevertheleſs through the envy of the devil came death into the world*, *i. e.* through Satan's malicious Tempting, and Man's voluntary Compliance with it, this Puniſhment (before threatened and denounced) was actually inflicted on the Sons of Men. I know this is denied by ſome Perſons: * *Socinus* very confidently tells us that *Adam* in the State of Integrity had died, although he had not ſinned. And others (as well as he) who deny original Sin, aver that Man before his Fall, even in Innocence, was naturally mortal. But this is like the reſt of their bold Aſſertions, which have no Foundation in the holy Scriptures; for you have heard what it ſaith. And we cannot but take Notice in the Hiſtory of *Geneſis*, that the *Tree of Life* in Paradiſe was given to our firſt Parents to eat of, to aſſure them that they ſhould live for ever if they obeyed God's Commandment. Their daily eating of the Fruit of that Tree was to be a Symbol and Sign of their Immortality. Beſides, it appears that Death is not natural, becauſe Nature is againſt a Separation of the Soul and Body, and therefore is afraid of it. And to wave the Conſideration of the firſt Sin, it is evident that Death is the Puniſhment of actual and perſonal Offences. Here we may apply that of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* iii. 23. *There is no difference: for all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God.* All Men (as well as *Adam*) all Ranks and Sorts of Men

* *Prælect.* cap. 1.

Men are Sinners, and therefore they die. *The wages of ſin is death*, ſaith the foreſaid Apoſtle, it is become as due to a Sinner as Wages to a Workman. Death is the juſt Recompence of Mens offending God. *For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly amongſt you, and many ſleep, i. e.* die, 1 Cor. xi. 30. For what Cauſe? If you conſult the Chapter, you'll find it was for their ſinful Miſcarriages. It is Sin and that alone which undermines theſe Houſes of Clay, which renders them weak and crazy, and at laſt is the Cauſe of their Downfall. But it will be ſaid, Why do godly and righteous Men die? for Chriſt hath died for them, therefore why ſhould they undergo that Penalty? I anſwer, Though theſe die, yet there is a vaſt Difference between their Death and that of others. It is not properly a Puniſhment to them, but it is rather a Bleſſing, a Favour, a Mercy. It is to them a Period to the Body of Sin in them, it is an End to all Trouble and Miſery, and it is an Entrance to everlaſting Peace and Happineſs: Whereas to the Ungodly it is quite otherwiſe.

Thirdly, As I have ſhewed you in general that Sin is the Cauſe and Procurer of Death, ſo now to give you a more particular and diſtinct Account of it, I muſt remind you that by Sin's Entering into the World, a *Curſe* came along with it on Man's Body, and thence *Frailty* and *Weakneſs* enſued, and thereby a conſtant Liableneſs to Mortality. *As for man, his days are as graſs: as a flower of the field, ſo he flouriſheth; for the wind paſſeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof knows it no more*, Pſal. ciii. 15, 16. The Materials we now conſiſt of are infirm, and we fall of ourſelves. Human Bodies ever ſince the firſt Apoſtacy from God have been ſubject to hurtful *Caſualties* and *Sickneſſes*. Of which two I will particularly ſpeak, and then you will further apprehend, by what I ſhall ſay, that we are hourly ſubject to the mortal Inſults of that implacable Enemy which I am ſpeaking of.

Strange Accidents and *unexpected Events* attend the Life of Man, and it is not in his Power to prevent or avoid them. The fanciful Poets tell us, that *Achilles* was dipped in the *Stygian* Lake, that he might thereby be kept for the Future from receiving any Wounds in the Wars: But it ſeems his Heel was untouched by the Water, whence it was, they ſay, that he was wounded in that Place. So we ſee Men have thought themſelves to be as 'twere *invulnerable* in all Parts, they have eſcaped the Dangers that others fell under, nothing hath been able to hurt them: But at laſt they find their Errour, ſome ſudden Calamity attacks them, ſome Miſchief befalls them which never came within the Verge of their Thoughts. *Julius Cæſar*, who had been victorious in Fifty ſet Battles, and never received a dangerous Stroke; after all Perils ſo happily eſcaped abroad, at Home in the Senate-Houſe received Twenty Three Wounds, all of them deadly. *Bibulus*, a *Roman* Commander, that had been ſucceſsful in the Wars, as he came in Triumph and great Pomp through the Streets of *Rome*, was killed by a Tile that fell from a Houſe-top. *Æſchilus* ſitting in the open Air bare-headed, and having a bald Head, an Eagle miſtaking that (as it is thought) for a white Stone, let fall out of her Talons a Tortoiſe, ſome ſay a Crab-fiſh, on it to crack it, and get the Meat out of it, and thereby killed the poor Man, and made him die (what he was) a *Tragick* Poet indeed. *Æmilius Lepidus* loſt his Life by hitting his Foot againſt a Door-Poſt. *Aufidius* by ſtumbling againſt the Conſul's Chamber-Door procured his End.

It were eaſy to ſhew that all the *Elements* have conſpired as it were againſt Man's Life: The *Fire* hath ſpread its devouring Arms, and hath conſumed great Numbers: The *Air*, which is the Inſtrument of Life, hath by its infectious Blaſts bereaved Thouſands of their Breath, and ſent them to their Long Home. The *Earth* with its obnoxious Steams and Exhalations hath done the like, beſides that, by its ſudden breaking in or falling upon ſome Perſons, it hath provided for them a Grave. Likewiſe, this Element hath been made inſtrumental, by its Barrenneſs and Unfruitfulneſs, to Dearth and Famine. The *Water* either condenſed into Ice, and arrived to the Keeneſs of a Sword, hath diſpatched many; or elſe remaining in its Fluid and uſual Form hath drowned and ſtifled others; yea, by divine Permiſſion whole Cities and Towns have periſhed by ſudden Innundations. We are partly furniſhed with Inſtances of all theſe in the ſacred Records of the *Old Teſtament*. God ſwept away the old World with a *Deluge*, cauſing it to rain on the Earth Forty Days and Nights with exceſſive Vehemency, and at the ſame Time the Waters contain'd in the Seas and Depths of the Earth, were forcibly drawn out to augment the Torrent. The *Sodomites* were deſtroy'd by the mercileſs Flames: There is a *Rain* of Fire as well as Water, for it is ſaid, *It rained brimſtone and fire from heaven*, Gen. xix. 24. At other Times the infected *Air* hath prov'd mortal, as when God ſent Peſtilences and Contagions among the *Iſraelites* for their notorious Crimes. And we read that the *Earth* opened its Mouth and ſwallow'd up *Corah* and his Complices. Thus all the Elements are made ſerviceable to Mortality, when God gives the Word.

Moreover, how often hath Death mix'd it ſelf with our Food, and made its Way to ſeveral by their Meat and Drink? There was *Death in the Pot* which was ſet on for the Sons of the Prophets: There was a poiſonous Herb that would have diſpatch'd them, if it had not been wonderfully prevented. They tell us that *Anacreon* was choak'd with the Kernel of a Grape, the drunken Poet dying by what he ſo loved, and uſed to live by. *Fabius* the *Roman*, with a ſingle Hair taken in a Draught of Milk, had the ſame Fate. *Pomponius Columbus* the Vice-Roy of *Naples*, by Eating liberally of Figs, died ſuddenly of them. *Melchior* Duke of *Brunſwick* was kill'd by a Surfeit on Strawberries. Pope *Paul* the II. by Eating of Melons became apoplectick, and ſo died. Pope *Adrian* the IV. was choak'd with a Fly in his Drink. Our King *Henry* the I. died of a Surfeit, by Eating of Lampreys. And * *Luther* tells us of a Biſhop of *Triers*, who Drinking one Draught fell into horrible Conſternations and Terrors, and ſo expir'd. Thus Death deprives ſome of Life by that which was deſign'd to maintain it.

* *Colloqu. Menſal.*

What indeed is there that doth not contribute to our End? Our officious and kind Friends do oftentimes advance and haſten our Death. We frequently promote it our ſelves by our own Neglect, or whatever it is that ſuffers us not to attend to our Preſervation. Thus *Cæſar* pocketed up the Paper which was delivered him by his Friend *Artemidorus*, wherein the whole Plot of the *Roman* Senate againſt him was diſcover'd. We contribute to our own Fate: Thus the Courtier, the Gentleman, the Student, the Soldier, the Merchant, the Tradeſman, the Mariner, the Husbandman are at one Time or other obſerv'd to do ſomething toward it, yea to pull it down upon their own Heads.

It might be remark'd, that ſometimes our *Affections* and *Paſſions* convey Death to us. Old *Eli* and his Daughter-in-law died of *Grief*: And it is not to be doubted that this ſingle Emotion of the Spirits hath kill'd its Ten Thouſands. *Valerius Maximus* tells us, that the celebrated Prince of *Poets*, becauſe he could not unfold the Riddle propounded by the Fiſhermen, died of Vexation and Sorrow. Others relate, that the Great *Philoſopher* threw himſelf into *Euripus*, merely out of Diſcontent, becauſe he could not find out the Cauſe of the Ebbing and Flowing of it. *Diodore* the Logician fell down ſtark dead upon the Place, becauſe he could not anſwer an Argument which was publickly propounded to him. Or this may be attributed to *Shame* as well as *Grief*; and indeed that Paſſion often accompanies this. Great Numbers of Perſons have died out-right for the Death of their Friends or Relations.

But as theſe and the reſt before-mention'd *ſigh* out their laſt Breath, ſo others expire it with exceſſive *Joy* and *Over-gladneſs*. Our own Chronicles report, that *Arthur* Lord *Liſle*, being impriſon'd by King *Henry* the Eighth, and daily expecting Death in the *Tower*, was unexpectedly ſet free, and thereupon he inſtantly died of ſudden Joy. This Paſſion prov'd mortal to *Dionyſius* the *Sicilian* Tyrant, and to *Sophocles* the Tragedian, if we may credit *Valerius Maximus*. *Chilo* the *Spartan* ſunk down dead as he was imbracing his Son a Conqueror at the *Olympick* Games. *Publius Craſſus* died of profuſe Laughter: So did *Chryſippus*, as *Laertius* tells us; and ſome others that we read of, have gone laughing out of the World.

Some die merely by *Imagination*, of which you may ſee ſeveral notable Inſtances in *Cardan* and *Charon*. *Plato*, they ſay, expired as he was ſleeping, and perhaps in a Dream, when his Fancy was *over-buſy*, and over-whelm'd his Spirits. *Cardan* tells us of one that ended his Days merely by ſeeing one let Blood. *Charon* relates that an other, who was condemn'd to die, and being

ing brought upon the Scaffold, he had his Eyes cover'd, in order to receive the Stroke from the Executioner; but his Pardon being brought, they uncovered his Eyes that he might ſee and receive it, and loe he was really dead! *Ludovicus Vives* mentions a Jew in *France*, who rode by Chance over a dangerous Bridge, there being only a Plank for the Paſſage, he not knowing what Peril he was in, being in the dark: But the next Day, when he came and was ſhewed the Place, he immediately fell down dead.

Fear and *Anger* have alſo both been acceſſary to the Death of many; and *more* yet have ended their Lives by Means of the unruly Motions and Sallies of *Love*.

The Time would fail me to enumerate the ſtrange Surprizes of Mortality; for tho' that of the Apocryphal Writer be true, * *All men have one entrance into life, and the like going out*, i. e. generally ſpeaking their End is the ſame, they all leave this World, and paſs to an other; yet if we ſpeak of the particular Kinds of Death, of the individual Ways and Avenues that lead to the other State, we muſt acknowledge that there are *different Goings-out*. For every Thing almoſt in Nature hath been, and is daily ſerviceable towards the bringing us to our Graves. So that it is not a Wonder that Life is not protracted to any long Period; yea, it is rather a Wonder that Men die not ſooner; it is ſtrange that any arrive to old Age. I ſay it is *ſtrange*, if we conſider the various and almoſt numberleſs *Accidents* that Mortals are expoſed to. I have mentioned theſe Things, not that you are apt to doubt of them, (for I believe many of you can produce ſeveral Inſtances of the like Nature, and ſome of a different from what I have offered:) But theſe Things are here propounded to you, to *remind* you of the great Hazard and Uncertainty of your Lives, that thereby you may be effectually ſtirr'd up to provide againſt it, that is, to be fit and ready to entertain Death in whatſoever Shape and Guiſe it ſhall come.

* *Wiſd.* vii. 6.

In the next Place, a farther Account may be given of Death's univerſal Sway, from the Conſideration of the Variety of *Infirmities* and *Maladies* which infeſt human Nature, the Multiplicity of *Diſeaſes* and *Sickneſſes* which our Bodies are ſubject to. Many bring theſe into the World with them, for they are either entail'd upon them by their Parents, and ſo are hereditary: Or elſe, without any Infection or Depravation from them, the Parts are ſo prepared and framed by Nature, that they may be ſaid to contain in them the Seeds of ſuch and ſuch Diſeaſes. I doubt not but ſome bodily Evils are originally fix'd in the Parts; otherwiſe we ſhould not have Infants ſo diſquieted, there would not be the Stone in Children of Five or Six Years old. Elſe Medicaments would be more certainly applied to the Parts in thoſe that are adult, and would have the ſame Succeſs generally in all. It is granted by the Learned, that thoſe Two Diſtempers which are ſo common, the *Meaſles* and *Small-Pox*, proceed from the Impurity of the maternal Blood. There is hardly one in a Thouſand but hath had theſe Maladies; therefore we may conclude that they depend on a common Cauſe, *viz.* that with which the Child is nouriſh'd in the Womb. This afterwards defiles the Maſs of Blood, which on Occaſion ferments and putrifies, and drives forth the infected Portions of the Humours into the Skin. Of the thinner Excrement the firſt of theſe Diſtempers is bred, of the Thicker the Second. Thus theſe (and 'tis likely ſome other Indiſpoſitions) are natural to us from our Birth. Beſides, I am of Opinion that ſeveral Diſeaſes ſpring from the Make and Fabrick of the organical Parts of the Body, as the Lungs, the Stomach, the Reins, *&c.* And they are ſituated not in theſe only where the main Seat of the Malady is, (tho' ſometimes only and chiefly in that;) but in the other preparing Veſſels, Conduits and Conveyances. If they are not primitively from the Fabrication of theſe and the forementiond Parts, I would aſk, Why are they that are of the ſame Temper, (ſo far as we can poſſibly gueſs by ſeveral Circumſtances and Effects whence we argue the Likeneſs of Mens Tempers,) why are they differently diſeaſed? And I would demand, Why ſome of thoſe that uſe frequent Debauches, and are continually intemperate, and give all Occaſions for ſeveral Diſtempers, yet are never troubled with them? And others, on the contrary, who by the ſober and exact Conduct of their Lives, prepare no Fuel for thoſe Diſeaſes, yet are commonly incident to them, and are ſorely afflicted with them. This cannot be reſolved into any thing ſo well as *a particular Make of the Parts.* The former Perſons have Parts ſo framed by Nature, and of ſuch a peculiar Conſtitution, that they contain no noxious Qualities in them, nor do receive any into them, and ſo they are free from the Diſeaſes which moleſt others. But thoſe latter, whoſe Parts are of a quite different Nature, (as ſuppoſe the Kidneys with a petrifying Quality, *&c.* which may be either from the Parent, or from the Divine Architect) are liable to ſuch and ſuch particular Maladies within, and are apt to receive ſuch morbifick Impreſſions from without. Thus, as I conceive, bodily Indiſpoſitions are very much owing to the Structure and Conformation of the Parts. God and Nature have laid the Scene of them. They originally proceed from the peculiar Contexture of the Bowels. Hence even from our very Infancy, Diſeaſes are harbour'd in our frail Fleſh.

But leaving this Topick, I might ſhew you that *All the Parts* of the Body have their *particular Infirmities* appropriated as it were unto them.

And here, to be methodical, I will conſider the Body of Man as it conſiſts of Three Apartments or Regions. The uppermoſt is the *Head*, the Diſeaſes proper to which are the Head-ach, Giddineſs, Apoplexy, Epilepſy, Lethargy, Sottiſhneſs or Dotage, which is the Extinguiſhing of Reaſon in Phlegm or Cold; Madneſs, which is the Diſcompoſing of it with exceſſive Heat. Beſides Blindneſs, and all other Maladies of the Eyes, Ears, Noſtrils, Teeth, Jaws, Tongue: With all Diſtillations and Catarrhs. The Head likewiſe is the proper Seat of Palſies. And laſtly, the Hair is not exempted from Maladies, and thoſe none of the leaſt troubleſome, Witneſs the † *Plica Polonica.* The Middle Region of Man is the *Breaſt*, which hath its peculiar Diſtempers, and ſuch as are proper to no other Part beſides: Theſe are Coughs, Difficulty of Breathing, Pleuriſy, Inflammation and Ulcer of the Lungs, Palpitation and Deliquium of the Heart. The *loweſt Diviſion* (which is the largeſt) is ſubject to Indigeſtion and Pain of Stomach, to Obſtruction of Liver and Spleen, to Jaundice, Colick, Flux, Worms, the Stone, and Gravel. Thus we may apply that of the Prophet, we may truly ſay, *From the ſole of the foot even to the crown of the head there is no ſoundneſs.* There are Diſeaſes incident to all the Parts of the Body; from one End to the other. And how then can we imagine ourſelves free from the Aſſaults of Death? Yea, how can we expect but every Hour to be ſeiz'd upon by ſome Diſtemper or other? And of the whole numerous Retinue of them, it is even ſtrange if one of them, yea if ſeveral together do not diſlodge our Souls.

† *Philoſophical Tranſact.* for Jan. 1684-5.

But further to enlarge on this Matter, and to let you ſee and make you ſenſible (which is the Deſign of this Diſcourſe) how obnoxious we are to Death, you muſt know that there are *Diſeaſes* from the Defect of any of the Three famous *Faculties* in Man's Body, *viz.* 1*ſt*, The *Animal* one, which is ſeated in the Brain, and is the Fountain of Senſe and Motion. 2*dly*, The *Vital*, which reſides in the Heart, and makes its Diſtribution into the whole Body. 3*dly*, The *Natural*, which is employ'd about Digeſtion and Concoction, in order to the Nouriſhing and Growth of the Parts. If either of theſe Three Functions decay and fail us, we are certainly in a dangerous Condition. If the *Brain* diſcharges not the Animal Spirits duly, and without Obſtruction, then Apoplexies or ſome other of that Herd of Diſtempers before-mention'd invade us, and our Lives are preſently hazarded. If the *Heart* be defective, (tho' the Head and Brain be well enough,) *i. e.* when the vital Spirits are ſtopp'd, which afford Matter for making the animal ones, our Lives are again in Jeopardy. And ſo likewiſe the *natural Deficiency* is as productive of Maladies in human Bodies. On this Account it muſt needs be that Mortality is ever approaching us, and making its violent Inroads upon us.

Again, from the *Humours*, as well as the *Spirits*, we are ever deriving one Indiſpoſition or other. If the *Serous Humour* abound, it cauſes Dropſies. If either the *Cholerick* or *Melancholick* diffuſe themſelves through the Blood, they produce the Jaundice, yellow and Black. If there be a preternatural Circulation, and Over-heating of the *Blood*, Fevers and Agues are engender'd, for theſe are diſorderly Fermentations of that Humour in the Body. But as poor

Mortals are diſpatch'd by Fevers which proceed from the Blood, ſo likewiſe there are thoſe that are ſeated in the other Humours, and ſome in the *Spirits*, and others in the *Fleſhy* and *Solid Parts*. It will not be impertinent, I hope, to repreſent theſe different Species of Maladies to you, that you may be made apprehenſive of that which I am all this while aiming at, *viz.* the Brevity of your Lives, and the Uncertainty of your Abode here.

Thoſe *Fevers* which Phyſicians call *Putrid*, are bred of the Putrefaction of *Humours*: And theſe are either *continual* or *intermitting*. Sometimes our frail Bodies are afflicted with *Quotidians*, which are one continued Fit, and they are ſaid to happen when the Phlegmatick Humour is corrupted. But the Diſtemper is *Intermitting* when the Party is afflicted only at certain Times: Of which Kind are *Tertians*, caus'd by an excrementitious Cholerick Humor, putrifying in the Body, and *Quartans* which ariſe from the Predominancy of corrupt Melancholy. The Inequality of theſe Fevers in our Bodies, proceeds from the great Difference of thoſe foreſaid Humours. Flegm, as it is ſoon diſſipated and diſſolv'd, ſo it as ſoon recollects itſelf, and makes a new Conteſt. Choler makes a fiercer and longer one. Melancholy being an obſtinate Humour, and groſs and dull, cannot ſo eaſily return upon us, *viz.* not till the Fourth Day. Hence *Quartans* are ſtubborn, and vex Phyſicians as well as their Patients.

The *Spirits* alſo, no leſs than the *Humours*, do particularly nouriſh this Sort of Diſtempers, and are the proper Scene of them, *viz.* when there is an Inflammation, an Over-heating of the vital Spirits by reaſon of too much Motion and Agitation, or elſe by Obſtruction, which cauſeth Heat by an Antiperiſtaſis. Theſe Fevers, feeding on the Spirits only, ſcarcely endure above One or Two Days, and Recovery or Death follows within Three or Four. Of this Sort (ſay ſome) are all *malignant* and *peſtilential* Fevers, theſe latter differing from the former only in the Degree and Height of their venemous and contagious Quality. This Kind of Evil is particularly diſtinguiſh'd (tho' not always) by its purple Marks, which are infallible Symptoms of this malignant Diſtemper. The *peſtilential Fever*, if it arrives to its utmoſt Height, is the *true Plague*, and few eſcape Death. In our Memory, about a Hundred Thouſand Perſons in *London* and *Weſtminſter*, were ſnatch'd away in * One Year by this raging Infection. Death is here rampant, and is now in the very Extremity of its Fury. The King of Terrors now tyrannizes, and all that are able labour to fly as far as they can out of his Territores. But at other Times he is more demure and ſilent, and without any great Stir and Noiſe effects his fatal Deſigns.

* 1665.

Which reminds me of the laſt Sort of Fevers which Phyſicians tell us of, and call it an *Hectick*, *i. e.* an habitual one, becauſe it is more fixed than thoſe that are in the *Humours* and *Spitits*. This *Maraſmus* (for ſo it is called) by little and little preys on the languiſhing Body, and (to uſe the Expreſſion of the *Apocalypſe*) *eats the Fleſh, and burns it with Fire.* This ſly Devourer conſumes the ſolid Parts, and feeds upon the very Bones and Membranes inſenſibly. Therefore this is a lingering Diſtemper, and Death who before ran, doth now but creep.

Thus I have given you ſome Account of the various Kinds of this particular Diſeaſe. I have not ſtudied Exactneſs, for I do not find that the Phyſicians themſelves have attained to that. Theſe Sons of Art are obſerved to differ in their marſhalling of the ſeveral Sorts of this Diſtemper into their proper Ranks, and ſometimes they warmly encounter one an other about it, and ſeem to partake of the Subject they treat of. All that I was to do was to repreſent unto you how many Sorts of *Flames* our Bodies are liable to, and to let you ſee that when ſuch a Variety of Fires is kindled in us, theſe Cottages muſt needs be burnt down and reduced to Aſhes. I remember *Pliny* profeſſes it a Miracle that the *World* is not ſet on Fire and conſumed by it, ſeeing there are innumerable Fires in the Sun and Stars, and heated Clouds, and in the ſubterraneous Vault. But truly if we reflect on what I have ſaid, it is as wonderful that our *Bodies* are not oftner devoured, conſidering the ſeveral Conflagrations which are in the diſordered Spirits and other Parts, and ſeeing there is ſuch abundant Fuel for them every where. Therefore it is a Saying of the *Jewiſh* Maſters, *It is a greater Miracle that is wrought in a ſick Ma than was done of old in the three Children.* That a Man in a Fever is not burnt up, is in a Manner as ſurprizing and ſtrange, as if one that is caſt into a fiery Furnace were not conſumed, for the Fire within muſt needs be as dangerous as that without.

I might ſtill go on, and let you ſee yet further how *Diſeaſes* invade us, and conſequently how *Death* itſelf makes its Inroads upon us. Many are bred by weak and ill Concoctions, many are cauſed by natural Weakneſs and Infirmity, or by too great a Repletion, and Want of Moderation in eating and drinking, which ſo furniſh the Bodies of Men with crude and indigeſted Humours. That Man may probably arrive to a great Age who daily digeſts well; but then to this are required Sobriety and due Abſtinence, a fitting Portion of Sleep and Reſt, daily Exerciſe, Chearfulneſs and Content of Mind: All which becauſe he is eaſily hindred from attaining, it cannot be expected that his Body ſhould continue long in a hail Plight. What a vaſt Number of Diſeaſes are poured-in upon us by the indigeſted *Lympha*'s which are found in all Parts ariſing from the excrementitious Humours and Diſtillations which they abound with? Theſe afford Matter to a Multitude of Diſtempers which we labour under: Yea, the Generality of Maladies (as I conceive) is no more but this, *viz.* an Innundation of groſs Rheums and Defluxions on the ſeveral Parts of the Body, which according to the different Parts they affect receive different Names. Juſt as the main Ocean is in itſelf but one vaſt Maſs of Waters, but according to the ſeveral Regions of the Earth it paſſes by, and the divers Shoars it waſhes, hath divers Denominations. In a reſembling Sort this Heap of ſalt Waters, this morbifick Sea in the Body of Man, though it be one and the ſame Maſs of Humours, yet is called by different Names, and known by divers Titles among the Profeſſors of Medicks, merely becauſe of the different Parts of the Body it paſſes by or reſides in.

Thus when the Head and Brain and animal Spirits are diſordered by this degenerate Matter, the Diſtemper goes under the Names of Meagrim, Frenzy, Melancholy, Falling Sickneſs, Lethargy, Apoplexy, and other drowzy Maladies which lead Men by Sleep to Death. If this Defluxion be more particularly on the Organ of Hearing, then the Diſtemper is Deafneſs: If it falls on the Optick Nerve, or the Coats and Humours of the Eyes, then there is a Deficiency in the Sight, there are Specks and Spots, Inflammations and Redneſs, Suffuſions or Cataracts, not only Dimneſs but total Loſs of Sight, an Introduction to the Darkneſs of Death. If this Diſtillation we are ſpeaking of light either on the *Uvula* or the *Palate*, then we call the Indiſpoſition either a Falling down, or an Inflammation, or a Swelling of thoſe Parts. If theſe peccant Humours are ſent to the *Jaws* and *Throat*, it is named a Squinancy. When this brackiſh Ocean reaches the *Breaſt* and *Lungs*, then the Malady is ſaid to be an Inflammation, or a Catarrh, or a Phthiſick, or an Aſthma, or (if it be audible) a Cough. When this excrementitious Matter affects the *Heart*, it is ſaid to be Trembling or a Swooning. When the *Stomach* is overflowed with theſe corrupt Liquors, ſo that the Ferment is vitiated, and the Tone is ſpoiled, then this Diſorder is called by ſome of theſe Names, Want of Appetite, or the Exceſs of it, Nauſeating of Meat, violent Voiding of it, Impoſtumes and Ulcers, Pains peculiar to that Part. If this evil *Humour* occupies the Joynts, the Gout is the noted Name for the Diſtemper. If it affects the *inward Skin* or *Membrane*, that inveſts the Ribs and the adjacent Parts of the Cavity of the Breaſt, it is entituled a Pleuriſy. If the corroding Matter deſcends to the *Inteſtines* and *Bowels*, it is the Cholick, the *Iliack* Paſſion, Exulcerations, Inflammations, Fluxes, &c. If it falls on the *Liver*, and diſtempers that, it makes it either too hot or too cold, which is the Root of divers Diſeaſes; or it produces the Jaundice, or breeds hard Tumours and Swellings in this Part. If it lights on the *Spleen*, it cauſes Inflammations and Swellings, and that black and troubleſome Melancholy which is uſually called *Hypocondriack*.

If the morbifick Juice be poured on the *Reins* and *Bladder*, then follow the Gravel and Stone in both of them, the Diabetes, the Strangury, and other very conſiderable Diſorders in ſome of thoſe Veſſels. If the unwholeſome and thickened Diſtillation ſeize the *Nerves*, the Miſchief admits of an other

Appellation: Then you hear Phyſicians talk of paralytick and convulſive Motions; for if the poor Patient's Sinews be *relax'd* by the Flowing of Humors that obſtruct the Diſtribution of the Animal Spirits, and conſequently the Paſſage of them into the Muſcles, then a Palſey follows. Or, if (on the contrary) theſe be *contracted*, there muſt needs be a Cramp, a Spaſm, a Convulſion; for the acid Humour which twitches the Nerves cauſes this drawing of them together. If the Deluge of theſe Waters be upon the *Abdomen* or *Belly*, then it is a Dropſy: If it generates Wind, it is a Tympany; (where by the Way I might take Notice of a Blot in the common Medicks: They ſay there are Three Species of Dropſies, Aſcites, Tympanites, and Anaſarca; whereof one is no Hydrops properly ſo call'd, for the Second of theſe is a Tumor caus'd by Wind, not Water.) In brief, if the ſuperfluous and feculent Matter infeſt the *whole Body*, the main Maſs of Blood, and the Habit, then a Cachexy, or the Scurvy, and the Wandring Rheumatiſm, are thought by ſome to be fit Appellatives for it. And thus, tho' moſt of the Diſeaſes proceed from *other* Cauſes likewiſe, (for there are ſeveral concurrent and joint Cauſes of all Maladies in the Body,) yet they at one Time or other are occaſion'd by the Falling of undue and indigeſted Humours on the Parts. Theſe groſs Vapours, this ſlimy and unprepared Matter is the general Source and Fountain of them, and the Diſtemper is call'd by different Names according to the different Parts it lights upon. Now is it not evident that all this muſt needs give a grievous Shock to our poor Tabernacles? Can it be thought ſtrange that Health is interrupted, and that Death approaches?

And again, I could add here what ſtrange Diſorders and Diſtempers happen in the Body for Want of *Tranſpiration*, which is as it were the whole Body's Breathing thro' the *Skin*. But when *this* is ſtopt by reaſon of the Contraction of the Pores, then thoſe Diſeaſes which uſed to be expell'd by them, (as Colds, Catarrhs, Coughs, Inflammations, Fevers, *&c.*) are now nouriſh'd and increas'd: And whilſt theſe Paſſages are ſhut up, Death oftentimes enters in. Many Thouſands of Perſons die yearly for Want of the due Evaporation of thoſe fuliginous Particles, which the native Fire, the vital Heat continually produces.

Doth it not appear, then, from what hath been ſaid, (and much more I could have added, but that it would rather look like a Lecture of Phyſick and Anatomy than of Divinity;) Doth it not appear, I ſay, that Death makes its Way by diverſe and various Paſſages? Yea, by what *different* and *contrary* Methods doth it aſſault us? Fevers inflame us. Agues freeze us. Calentures dry us up. Hydropick Humours drown us, and waſh us away. Lethargick Diſtempers lay us aſleep: But the tormenting Stone and the racking Gout rouze us, and will not ſuffer us to take any Reſt. There is the peeviſh Conſumption, and the moping Melancholly, and the wild Phrenzy: There is the trembling Palſey, and the griping Cholick. There are the tedious Languiſhments of *Chronical* Diſeaſes, and the diſmal Surprizes and dangerous Arreſts of *Acute*. Too much Heat, and too much Cold equally overſet us. Fulneſs and Emptineſs are alike fatal: A Surfeit may diſpatch us as ſoon as Hunger.

Moreover, There are Diſorders of Body which are properly the *Surgeons* Care, as Bruiſes, Tumors, Abſceſſes, Ulcers, Gangrenes, and the like: And thoſe which proceed from the Solution of Continuity, (as the Artiſts ſpeak) *viz.* Wounds, Diſlocations, Fractures. Several of theſe are not curable without very painful Applications, as Cutting, Burning, Sawing. The very *Naming* of which is dreadful, much more the *Undergoing* of them; inſomuch, that what is deſign'd by the Artiſt for Prolonging his Patient's Life, doth contribute ſometimes toward the Shortning of it, by frighting him as it were out of the World. The Probe, the Inciſion-knife, the Lancet, the Trepan, the Cupping-glaſſes are look'd upon by him as the Inſtruments of Death. Yea, the very *Ligatures* which are made uſe of, ſeem to be but the Emblems of his Funeral Binding, and his Winding-ſheet.

Again, is it any Wonder that our Health is interrupted, and that Death approaches, when we conſider that the Veſſels of the Body *do in Time wear out?* The *Heart* and *Lungs*, thro' which ſo many Thouſands of Circulations of

Blood have been made, are impair'd by this long Uſage. The *Stomach*, which hath been the Pot to boil ſo many Meſſes of Meat in, and the *Ureters* and *Bladder*, which have conſtantly tranſmitted through them ſuch Quantities of Liquor, cannot but be worſted by this continual wearing of them. The *Veins* and *Nerves* muſt needs become in Time weak and languid, feeble and lax, and not ſo able as formerly to diſcharge their Office.

Shall I mention in the next Place that there are *National Diſeaſes*, and that ſome Countries have their peculiar Diſtempers? *Egypt* and the adjacent Countries are infected with the Leproſy, the Elephantiaſis, and other Maladies which their Skins are affected with. Some Parts of the *Indies* are miſerably plagued with that Diſeaſe which with us takes its infamous Name from the *French*. There are topical Diſeaſes belonging to the *Africans*, as ſome Travellers have informed us. The Inhabitants near the *Alps* are infeſted with Tumours in their Throats. The *Spaniards* Diſeaſe is a Calenture. And *Englands* Air being changeable and generally moiſt, it produces Scurvy and Conſumptions, Diſeaſes that are Strangers to other Countries which are hot. And if I had Time to be curious and inquiſitive, I might ſhew you how the Deſtinies have entailed particular Maladies on other Countries.

Further, It might be ſhewed, that the Strength and Healthfulneſs of Mens Complexions do oftentimes unhappily become fatal to them; for being confident of their hail Plight, they run into the greater Diſorders of Life; they feed too highly, they live too luxuriouſly, they wholly neglect the Preſervation of that on which their Life depends; and ſo their Health makes Way for Sickneſs and Death.

Sometimes to be ignorant of the Diſeaſe is the Patient's Ruine: At other Times the Knowledge of it is killing, as *Seneca* long ſince obſerved, * The Cauſe of many Mens Death, ſaith he, is their being acquainted with their Diſtemper. For by being told the Danger they are in, they run into a greater, poſſeſſing their Thoughts with the Apprehenſion of their grievous Circumſtances, and their Imaginations working to that Heighth that their Souls deſtroy their Bodies.

But *Is there no Balm in* Gilead? *Is there no Phyſician?* Have not God and Nature afforded us Remedies againſt theſe fatal Maladies? The Men of Art will tell you, and that rightly, of *altering* and *purgative Medicines*. They commend to us Potions, Powders, Pills, Lohochs, Electuaries, Bolus's, Syrups, Troches. They preſent us with Emulſions, Expreſſions, Decoctions, Balſams, Tinctures, Eſſences, Elixirs, and all Sorts of Spirits and chymical Liquors. They have ſeveral other Claſſes of Medicines (which it is not proper to enumerate in this Place) that are of ſingular Uſe to Mankind. But it was never intended by Providence that Phyſicians ſhould make themſelves or others immortal in this Life; therefore no man is to expect any ſuch Thing from their Preſcriptions. Nay, it is certain that a Man may be as much troubled with the *Phyſick* as with the *Diſeaſe*: And ſometimes either unſkilfully or immoderately given it proves as fatal. That which is deſigned for a Remedy may prove a Man's Bane, and Death ſometimes may make Uſe of the Artiſts themſelves as its Executioners.

I ſpeak not this, or any Thing elſe in this Diſcourſe to diſparage the noble Faculty of Medicks. A Phyſician of Learning and Integrity is one of the moſt valuable Treaſures of the World: He is by the divine Concurrence and Bleſſing the Repairer of our human Breaches, the Reſtorer of our loſt Health, the Guardian of our Bodies, the Preſerver of our Lives, and the Tutelar Angel of Mankind. We are told by the wiſe Son of *Sirach* that *the Lord hath created the Phyſician*, and the firſt fifteen Verſes of that Chapter are a juſt Encomium compoſed in the Praiſe of him. And very noble Strokes there are in that Compoſure, fully diſplaying the tranſcendant Worth and Excellency of that Art, and the Profeſſors of it. But that which I have been ſuggeſting to you is only this, that Diſeaſes oftentimes and Death itſelf are too hard for this Art. And this muſt needs be ſo, becauſe oftentimes it is a difficult Thing to hit the Diſtemper: For the ſame Malady may proceed from divers Cauſes.

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* *Cauſa multis moriendi fuit, morbum ſuum noſſe.* De brev. vitæ.

To inſtance in an *Apoplexy*, it may be from a Default of the animal Spirits in the Brain, *i. e.* either their Moving diſorderly, or their Reſting too much. It may proceed from Heat or from Cold; from Flegm or from Melancholy; or from a Plethory of Blood, ſo that it becomes extravaſated, and is thrown upon the Brain. It may ariſe from an irritating and acid Humour that affects the Nerves: From Fullneſs or Emptineſs, from Vapours from the Stomach, from Winds: From immoderate Evacuations and Waſtings of the Body, from an exceſſive Paſſion of the Mind, from Sadneſs and Diſcontent: From a Blow or a Bruiſe, or from breaking a Vein. It may proceed from ſome or all of theſe; but which, it is difficult to tell: And what may be effectual for one may be oppoſite to the reſt. Thus the Maſters of Medicks are at Uncertainties. It is a great While before they find out the Diſeaſe, and the Patient may be dead before that. Sometimes Diſeaſes are hardly known becauſe the *Diagnoſtick* Part is difficult, *i. e.* the Symptoms and Effects of them are frequently uncertain and dubious. Hence it is that a diſtinſt Knowledge of the particular Diſtemper which a Man labours under is not eaſily attained; it is not preſently known of what Kind and Sort it is, and how it differs from others. No Wonder then that one of the learnedeſt and moſt ſucceſsful Phyſicians of this Age hath theſe Words, * Even the Learned (ſaith he) give Medicines raſhly and fortuitouſly, and like People ſhooting at Random, being uncertain whither they will tend, or what Ends or Effects they ſhall have. So that it happens, (as the ſame Author ſaith) that the Body of Man is as it were a Martial Field where theſe Champions try their Skill. And there are other Reaſons which may be aſſigned why the Phyſicians Art fails oftentimes. He is not infallible, and therefore ought not to be offended with *Roger Bacon*'s Title of one of his Books, *Of the Errors of Phyſicians.* And 'tis certain that *theſe* are more dangerous than thoſe of *other* Men, becauſe they frequently prove *mortal*. And here is their Unhappineſs oftentimes, that the more there are of them the worſe the Patient fares. Many great and rich Perſons may complain, as the Emperour *Adrian* did, that they are undone by the Throng of Phyſicians, for then generally there happens a Confuſion and Diſtraction of Counſels; and while all adviſe, none doth it to any Purpoſe.

* *Doctor* Willis, *Pharmaceut. Rational.*

I might here ſuggeſt what a mighty Task a Phyſician hath, and how great and laborious his Work is, or rather hath been heretofore; for in former Ages that which is now divided between the *Surgeon* and *Apothecary* was the Care of the *Phyſician* himſelf, who exerciſed Anatomy, dreſſed Wounds, ſet Bones, inquired into Herbs and Minerals, examined the Nature not only of Simples but Compounds, and this they did with their own Eyes and Hands. But afterwards two Societies of Men roſe out of theſe two Parts of Phyſick, which indeed makes the Task leſs, but then it is not ſo advantagious to thoſe that are to make Uſe of theſe Perſons.

But when the Men of Art have done all they can, and have exerciſed all the Skill they are Maſters of, which is very great and wonderful at this Day, (for there is no Science that is more improved than this of late;) yet it muſt be confeſſed, that the medical Applications themſelves are not able ſometimes to reach the Patient's Diſtemper: For ſo it is, that Medicines which paſs through ſeveral Digeſtions in the Body, and are carried about with the Maſs of Blood to all the Parts, cannot after ſo tedious a Circuit, wherein a great Part of their Vertue is loſt, ſhew themſelves efficacious to that particular Member, Part or Bowel (the *Brain* for inſtance, or the *Liver*) which are affected with the Diſtemper. Thence it is that many Medicaments which are preſcribed with great Skill and Faithfulneſs prove unſucceſsful; they drop their Efficacy before they can arrive at the Place they were intended for.

I might take Notice here, that the *Difference of the Method of Curing* cauſes ſome Difficulty and Danger. The *Preparation* of Medicines is either *Galenical* or *Chymical*; the firſt of which hath had the greateſt and longeſt Sway: But without Doubt there are ſome very uſeleſs, and others very unſafe Things in it, I mean unſafe for us in theſe Parts of the World, for *Galen* and *Hippocrates*, from whom theſe Medicaments are borrowed, were *Foreign* Phyſicians, and preſcribed ſuch Things as were good and proper in that Country where they lived, but perhaps in this cold Part of the World they are hurtful. I muſt tell you, a great Deal of Harm hath been done by this, for a Phyſician ſhould conſult both Time and Place. The other Way of preparing Phyſick is by Fire, whence are extracted Spirits, Elixirs, Oils, Tinctures, *&c.* But though this Way be approved of, and practiſed by ſome Perſons of great Learning and Judgement, yet I much queſtion the Safety of it; for thoſe Extractions being generally exalted above the Temper of human Bodies, and preying upon the milder Spirits of Man, may be thought, on that Account, to be inconvenient and noxious. However, theſe *Hermetick* Souls and the others beforementioned are at Variance, and are divided like the Schools of *Hillel* and *Shammai:* And in that Reſpect are ſome Blemiſh and Hindrance to the Medick Art, whilſt they ſtand in Oppoſition to each other.

Not to preſs too hard upon this *Art* or the *Profeſſors* of it, it may reaſonably and truly be ſaid, that Men generally paſs out of this World becauſe they will not be their *own Phyſicians*; my Meaning is, they will not take Care of themſelves, they will not exerciſe that Government over their Bodies which they may and ought to do. They might keep themſelves ſome Time from moſt Sickneſſes and Diſeaſes, by rectifying the *Non-naturalia* which Phyſicians ſpeak of, whence without Doubt the greateſt Part of Diſtempers proceeds. And therefore it is ſaid that *Galen* (who was a Phyſician himſelf, and one of the firſt Rank) lived a Hundred and Fourty Years by taking Care of theſe, *i. e.* by never eating and drinking his Full, by feeding upon nothing raw, and by carrying ſome Perfume about him always to correct the Air. But the Generality of Mankind fail in theſe Things, and others of the like Nature, and are not careful about their Diet and Repaſt, their Retention and Excretion, the Air they breath in, their Exerciſe and Reſt, their Sleeping and Waking, the Serenity or Perturbation of their Minds, which are the *Six Non-naturals* that are reckoned up, and have ſuch Influence on the Life of Man. And thence innumerable Diſeaſes come to be the Portion of the Sons of Men, and ſuch as refuſe to be cured either by *Hippocrates* or *Hermes*, by *Galenical* or *Chymical* Operations.

It is ſaid in the * *Talmud* that there are Nine Hundred and Three Diſeaſes, or Sorts of Death created in the World: Which they gather from *Pſal.* lxviii, 20. *Unto God the Lord belong the iſſues from, or of death*, or the *goings out to death*, (as the Original will bear it); becauſe the *Numeral Letters* of the Word *Totzaoth* here uſed amount to the foreſaid Number, they reckon this to be a perfect Account of all the Maladies that human Bodies are ſubject to: As if the Pſalmiſt had ſaid, Every Man that goes out of the World dies of one of theſe Diſeaſes. Though this be but a fanciful Conjecture of theirs, yet nothing is more true than this, that the *Number* of the Diſeaſes which our frail Bodies are liable to is very great, *the iſſues, the goings out to death* are *manifold* and *various.* For our Bodies conſiſting of ſo many different Parts, are the more eaſily put out of Order. So curious an Engine, ſo exact and elaborate a Frame is ſoon diſcompoſed. So Fine an Inſtrument, and of ſo many Strings, is quickly put out of Tune. Thus poor Man muſt needs die. From what hath been ſaid, and from many other Things which might be ſuggeſted nothing can be more evident.

* *In Beracoth.*

And among the *Diſeaſes* I might have reckoned *Old Age*, which is a Diſeaſe of itſelf, and the only one that ſome die of. There is in the Body of Man a conſtant Decay and Loſs, which is recruited and repaired as long as the manly Strength laſts: But this decaying in thoſe that are *aged*, there is no Poſſibility of a Recruit, their Spirits are exhauſted, their Nerves which ſhould diſtribute theſe are ſlacked, and their other Veſſels are worn out, and they cannot be renewed. Hence like a Lamp, they are extinguiſhed becauſe their Oil is waſted.

Give me Leave to ſay that in the ſtricteſt and moſt philoſophical Senſe our very Life is a Kind of *Death:* And when we arrive to the higheſt Exertments of the Former we make the neareſt Approaches to the Latter. Which I thus prove, When our natural Heat is moſt vigorous and active, it then prays upon the radical Humour, and drinks it up too faſt, ſo that this vital Oil is ſpent by the too greedy Draughts of theſe Flames. Yet, unleſs this innate Heat be in Action, we are not ſaid to live. But when it doth act briskly, it conſumes our primogenial Moiſture with which it is preſerved and kept alive. So that you ſee there is the ſame Cauſe of *Life* and *Death*, of the one in itſelf, of the other by Accident: For Life conſiſts of *Heat* and *Moiſture*, but *this* is conſumed by *that*, and *that* itſelf periſhes by *this* Conſumption, as a Flame deſtroys itſelf by licking up the Oil which is its Fuel. Thus the more vigorouſly we live, the ſooner we die: And thus (even philoſophically ſpeaking) to live is nothing elſe but to die and decay.

It will appear yet further, that in the midſt of Life we are in Death, if we conſider this, that when we are come to Years of Maturity, we are half dead, or more: For * what is paſt is in the Portion of Death, as *Seneca* ſaith rightly. The Years that we have lived are gone, and we may be ſaid to be ſo far deceaſed. We are not now the ſame Perſons that we were before, unleſs it be by Way of Equivalency, as Philoſophers ſay of the Element that ſurrounds Towers and Steeples, it is not the ſame but by Succeſſion only, as a Body of the like Nature comes in its Room. For (as he goes on in the ſame *Epiſtle*) * Every Day ſome Part of our Life goes from us, and as we grow up, Death invades us, and comes nearer and nearer to us by Degrees. And when we come to act the laſt Part of this Tragedy, that is done gradually; for as a Man was not perfected at once in the Womb, nor born at once, but one Part after an other, ſo he dies not at once: The Eyes being the tendereſt Part, and ſooneſt affected, fail firſt; then the Feet, as moſt remote from the Seat of vital Spirits, and the Heart laſt of all. And thus he that was divided between Life and Death all his Days, is now at length delivered up entirely into the full Poſſeſſion of the Latter.

I have now diſpatched the two firſt *general Heads* I propounded to treat of, namely, concerning the *Certainty of Death*, and the *Reaſons* and *Accounts* of it. There are now behind the *proper Inferences* from all. Since then there is a fatal Doom, an irreverſible Sentence upon us all, that we muſt die, and ſeeind there are ſo many Ways and Methods of effecting it, let us be throughly *ſenſible* of this undeniable Truth, and let us deport ourſelves accordingly. I ſay let us be *ſenſible* of it; for though it be generally acknowledged by all, though it be the univerſal Voice that all are to die, yet it is evident that Men do not act, and behave themſelves as thoſe that firmly believe this Propoſition. It is rather manifeſt that they flatter themſelves, and ſtrangely fancy that they ſhall be excepted out of the Bill of Mortality, out of the Number of thoſe that muſt come under the Power of Death. For otherwiſe certainly they would diſcover the Reality of this Belief and Perſuaſion in their Actions, they would be preparing themſelves for their Latter End, they would be ſetting Things in Order, and fitting their Souls for the Communion of Saints and Angels in an other World. This therefore is that which I now intend to urge upon you, that you would live in a deep Senſe of your mortal Condition, of your leaving this World, and never returning to this Scene of Things again. Man's Life is not like that of a Flie, recovered by the Sun or Fire: But when it is once extinguiſhed, it remaineth ſo. We may ſay with Reſpect to all Men, as *David* ſaid of his Child, *We muſt go to them: they muſt not come to us.* The *Twin-Brothers*, ſaid to live and die *by Turns*, was a mere Fable of the Poets. Death hath no Returns but that of the laſt Reſurrection, when Men ſhall ſee this World for a little Time, in order only to be eternally conſigned to an other. Seeing then it is thus, take Care to die well. * *This World* (ſay the *Jewiſh Doctors*) *is but a Porch to the other: Wherefore prepare thyſelf in the Entry, that thou mayeſt be admitted into that large and ſtately Triclinium, that feſtival Chamber.* This is the Work that I am at preſent putting you upon. Having already inſiſted upon this common Theme, now I am deſirous to make it uſeful and *effectual* to you. I would requeſt you to improve this Doctrine to the utmoſt, and make it ſerviceable to the Purpoſes of Religion and a godly Life. Which you may ſucceſsfully do if you follow theſe plain Directions.

1. *Meditate* conſtantly on Death. You that are *Chriſtians* may well be invited to this, ſeeing *Pagans* and *Jews* and all Ranks of Perſons have agreed in

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* *Quicquid ætatis retro eſt, mors tenet.* Epiſt. 59.

* *Quotidie demitur aliqua pars vitæ, & tum quoque cùm creſcimus vita decreſcit.* Ibid.

* *Pirk. Avoth.* c. 4.

this, to have ſome Monitors of Mortality. *Philip* King of *Macedon* had a Remembrancer on purpoſe to come daily to him, and to ſound theſe Words in his Ears, *Remember Sir that you are a mortal Man.* And we read that the very ſame Words uſed to be cried aloud to the *Victors* at their *Triumphs.* The religious *Jews* (ſuch as *Joſeph* of *Arimathæa*, of whom we particularly read in the Goſpel) had their Tombs and Sepulchres in their Gardens, that they might often ſee them, and walk to them, and converſe with them in the midſt of their Delights and Entertainments which thoſe Places afforded. St. *Jerom*, that religious and pious Father of the primitive Church, that he might continually have the Remembrance of Death and Judgement in his Mind, uſed to fix this Impreſſion on his Thoughts and Imaginations, that he *heard* always the Sound of the laſt Trumpet. Heretofore the Chriſtian Emperours at *Conſtantinople* had upon the Day of their Coronation a certain Number of Marble-Stones offered to their View, and were deſired to make Choice of which of them they pleaſed for their *Tomb-ſtone*, for to have their *Monument* made of. This was thought a fit and ſeaſonable Expedient to poſſeſs their Minds with the Remembrance of Death, even at the Time of their Inauguration, and when they were in the Heighth of their royal Pomp and Grandure. And the Records of both the primitive and later Times acquaint us, that many holy Men had religious Arts of conſerving the Memory of their Latter End, and of bringing thoſe Thoughts to their Minds. This was the conſtant Practice of devout Perſons, and I requeſt you to imitate them.

Take all fit Occaſions, then, of being reminded of your final Departure. And truly you cannot want Matter for your Meditation, whereſoever you caſt your Eyes, or which Way ſoever you bend your Thoughts. The paſſing Bells that you hear, the Noiſe of the Funeral Knells that are in your Ears, the Graves that you ſee dug or opened; or thoſe that you paſs by, even as you come to this Place; your Neighbours that you follow to the Grave, and that you ſee interred, and the Friends and Relations whom you converſe with on their Death-Beds, yea, and in their dying Hour, are ſufficient Memento's to you of your mortal State, and ſhould make indelible Impreſſions on your Hearts all the Time you ſurvive them here on Earth. It is true, we daily ſee (and may lament it with unſpeakable Regret and Sorrow) that theſe Objects which ſhould adminiſter to ſober Thoughts, and give Men very deep Reſentments of Mortality, are little taken Notice of by many. The frequent Spectacles which ought to remind Men of their frail and uncertain Condition here, are wholly diſregarded by them. They ſin, and that boldly in Sight of Death; and although their Graves are open continually before them. This, like the Man that was *poſſeſſed with a Devil and dwelt among the Tombs*, though they converſe with Death they act prophanely and diabolically. Thus the *Egyptians* in the midſt of their Banquetings cauſed a *Skeleton* to be ſet before them, to raiſe their Mirth and Jollity. *Herodotus* records it thus, The *Egyptians* (ſaith he) at their great Feſtivals carry about * a wooden Effigies reſembling a really dead Man, and ſhew it to one another, ſaying, † *Look upon this, and drink and be frolick, for thou ſhalt be ſuch when thou art dead.*

And there are too many at this Day who, though they reach not this Heighth of Impiety, are moſt ſcandalouſly unſenſible of their Mortality, and are diſregardleſs of all Admonitions and Remembrances of it. They indulge themſelves in all Manner of Luxury and Debauchery, and like thoſe ſtung with the Tarantula skip and dance to Death. But certainly it is extreme Madneſs thus to defie Death, it is frantick Boldneſs to confront the Dangers and Hazards of the Grave. And ſome of theſe Men will find this true, and be ſenſible of it before they go out of the World. For I muſt tell them this, the near Approach of Death will be formidable to them. Wounds prick and pain Men moſt towards Night. A guilty Conſcience torments moſt of all towards the Darkneſs of the Grave. A Death-Bed oftentimes repreſents Things in their true Shape, and as they really are. When theſe Perſons come to look on Death near at Hand, its Viſage will appear very ghaſtly. Their former Miſtakes

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* νεκρὸν ξύλινον. Lib. 2. cap. 28.

* Ἐς τοῦτον ὁρέων πίνέ τε ϗ τέρπεο· ἔσεαι γὰρ ἀποθανὼν τοιοῦτος. Ibid.

takes and Deluſions which they upheld themſelves by in their Health and Youth, will now vaniſh, and be found to be groundleſs and ridiculous.

Therefore I beſeech you correct your Thoughts before it is too late to do it: Have right Apprehenſions of Things, think and ſpeak of Death as you ſhould do. To that Purpoſe be every Day meditating on Death, and (as I directed before) make Uſe of thoſe Objects which are fit for that End. Paſs not by a *Grave*; eſpecially if there be many of them, without ſome ſolemn Thoughts concerning thoſe Houſes of Mortality. When you have an Opportunity, ſtay a While, and look into theſe Habitations of the Dead, and ſee what is there, obſerve what a great Change Death makes. Think of it, and that with great Seriousneſs; that you muſt (even you that are rich and wealthy) leave your ſpacious Houſes and Manſions, and come hither to the Chambers of Death, theſe narrow and contracted Rooms of the Grave, which have very low Roofs, and dirty Ceilings. You muſt quit your Lands and Acres for this little Spot of Ground. Thus the View of a Grave or a Sepulchre may be very uſeful to you, and ſuggeſt thoſe happy Thoughts which may fit you for Eternity.

Yea, this is certain, that to a pious and well diſpoſed Mind every Thing almoſt carries Memento's of Death: All Things remind them of Mortality. There are ſeveral Things which occur in your Callings, in your Employments, and in the Buſineſs you are concerned in, which may hint unto you your Removal from this World. Every Thing, if it be rightly improved, preaches a Funeral Sermon. Every Accident tolls the Bell to tell you that you are but Duſt and Aſhes. Our Lives are preſerved by the Deaths of other Creatures, * *Mortibus vivimus*, as *Seneca* ſaith; which cannot but bring to our Thoughts the Remembrance of our own Death. Yea, Life itſelf (as one of the Ancients ſaid truly) is προμυητὴς θανάτου, that which *initiates us in Death*, and inures us to the Knowledge and Senſe of it, and to a Deſire of it; for our Life being incumbred with ſo much Vanity and Vexation, with ſo many Croſſes and Miſeries, and being thereby ſo uneaſy and burdenſom to us, it prompts us to wiſh for a Change, and to beg a Releaſe from this World. And on ſeveral other Accounts it might be ſhewed that we have conſtant Monitors of our Diſſolution. What Stupidity, what Sottiſhneſs then is it not to *think* of it, when it never ceaſes to expoſe itſelf to our View, and to repreſent itſelf to our Thoughts, whether we will or no as it were.

* Lib. 10. Controv.

But I hear ſuch Language as this, I am *young*, and why ſhould *I think of dying?* I have no grey Hairs, no Wrinkles in my Cheeks. Tell the *old Man* of Death, who ſtoops towards the Grave, who is knocking at the Coffin with his Staff. I am healthful and luſty, my Blood runs briskly in my Veins and Arteries, all my Joynts are ſupple, I am all over Strength and Vigour, and ſo am like to be theſe many Years. I may therefore be excuſed from this Task which you are impoſing upon your Auditors, *viz.* the Meditation of Death. But I reply to this Perſon, Who told you that your young Years and preſent Health and Vigour ſhall continue? Who inſpired you with this contradictory Nonſenſe that you ſhall be always young? Who perſuaded you that theſe bodily Endowments ſhall not decay? Who aſſured you that any of theſe are a Protection againſt Death? Nay, who promiſed you that you ſhould live to arrive to old Age? If you had obſerved that none die but thoſe that are Fourſcore Years of Age, it were ſomething. If you had not ſeen ſome carried to the Grave before they had reached Twenty or Thirty Years, you might have ſome Colour and Pretence for what you ſay. But you cannot but confeſs the contrary to be true, and you have daily Inſtances and Examples of it before your Eyes. Many of your own Companions, your Aſſociates, your intimate Acquaintance, who were as young as you, and ſome of them younger, have led the Way, and thereby let you know that you may follow. Nay, greater Numbers of Perſons die in Youth than in old Age. Your Obſervation will confirm you in this, and ſatisfy you that there is not one in a Thouſand that lives to be old.

Therefore thoſe, who would excuſe themſelves from thinking of Death becauſe of their youthful Years, have *no Ground* for what they alledge. You are all obliged to be ſo wiſe as to conſider your latter End, and to conſider of it daily; for (as you have heard) Death makes its Aſſaults in all Places, at all Times, at all Ages, in all Conditions and States of Life whatſoever. There is no ſuch Thing as a Temper of Body that is equally poized: There is ſome Flaw in the fineſt Conſtitution: And thence ariſe Diſorders and Maladies. And though we ſhould daily prop and ſhore up theſe Bodies by Art, yet they will ſink and fall at laſt. The Organs of them will either by natural or violent Means be rendered ſo unfit that the Soul will not be able to perform its uſual Functions by them. The Tree, though it hath ſtood and flouriſhed a conſiderable Time, yet ſubmits at length to the Violence of repeated Strokes. Look then for Sickneſs and Death, daily entertain Thoughts of your going hence. Though ſome People fancy that they ſhall be many Years the older for a Thought of Death, let me tell you this is a groſs Miſtake, and none but fooliſh and perverſe Minds can harbour ſuch an Imagination. Be it known to you, we ſhall not call Death to us e'er the ſooner by a Foreſight of it, and by a ſerious Meditating upon it. Yea, we rather take the Courſe to prolong our Lives; for by this Means we *prepare* ourſelves for Death, which can only be by becoming truly religious: And when we are ſo, we derive upon ourſelves the Bleſſing of Long Life, I mean if God ſhall think fit in his Wiſdom to beſtow it upon us.

Be not diſcouraged then from this Duty, live in Expectation of a Change, and conſtantly carry it in your Thoughts. This is, as *Seneca* ſaith, *To go to Death*: And * judge you (ſaith he) which is beſt, that Death ſhould come to us, or that we ſhould go to that. If we go to it in our Fore-Thoughts and Meditations, then we ſhall not be ſurprized, then we ſhall not be ſeized on by Death of a ſudden, but we ſhall be provided for it, which is an unſpeakable Advantage. Thence the great *Roman* Orator and Philoſopher declares, That † the whole Life of a Man who is Maſter of true Philoſophy, is a Contemplating on Death: And he quotes no meaner a Man than *Socrates* for the Author of this Saying. Indeed *Meditation* itſelf is in its own Nature akin to *Death*; for when we draw off our Minds from the World, and the Things of it, we then call ourſelves inwards, we ſeparate ourſelves from Matter, we are disjoined from our Bodies. Which made the foreſaid Moraliſt ſay, ‡ To abſtract the Soul thus from the Body is no other than to learn to die. Thus Contemplation is a good Preparatory to Death, but eſpecially when it is exerciſed about Death itſelf. Then it capacitates the Soul for great and noble Diſcoveries about a future State, and by Thoughts of Mortality prepares for immortal Glory and Happineſs. So true is that of the forementioned Author, || A Man is never more divine than when he thinks of his being mortal. All this, I hope, will animate you in the Diſcharge of this noble Exerciſe. Wherefore ſet about it in good Earneſt. Make Death familiar to you by conſtant converſing with it in your Thoughts. Conſider ſeriouſly that it is appointed to you to die. *Duſt thou art, and to duſt thou ſhalt return.*

2. This Doctrine of Mortality teaches us *Humility*. Some of the Favourites of *Alexander* the Great, had flatter'd him with the Notion of being a Kind of God, and nearly related to *Jupiter*; which begot in him (and no Wonder) high Thoughts of himſelf. But it happen'd that he was wounded with a Dart in the Wars, and ſeeing his Blood iſſue from the Orifice, he was heard to ſay to the By-ſtanders, * "They tell me I am the Son of *Jupiter*, but "this Wound proclaims with open Mouth, that I am but a Man." The Senſe of which, corrected in ſome meaſure the falſe Opinion he had before, and made him entertain not ſo high Thoughts of himſelf. Thus when Men are convinced, and that by plain and undeniable Demonſtrations, that they are *mortal* Creatures, that their Life is continually in Danger, and that at length they muſt deſcend to the common Receptacle of all Mankind: This ſhould qualify their Pride and Arrogance. Be it known to them, that they

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* *Meditare utrùm commodius ſit, vel mortem tranſire ad nos, vel nos ad eam.* Epiſt. 26.

† *Tota philoſophorum vita commentatio mortis eſt.* Cic. Tuſc. Qu. lib. 1.

‡ *Secernere antem à corpore animum, nequicquam aliud eſt quàm emori diſcere.* Ibid.

|| *Homo nunquam magis divinus eſt, quàm ubi mortalitatem ſuam cogitat.* Sen. Ep. 121.

* *Senec. Epiſt.*

ſhall all be alike in the Grave. There, is no Difference between Kings and their meaneſt Subjects. The Royal Corps doth not retain a commanding and majeſtick Aſpect. You cannot diſtinguiſh between the Duſt of Princes and inferior People: There is no Mark, no Signature on the Bones of the one, whereby you may diſcern them from thoſe of the other. If Men of high Degree would conſider this, they would not ſwell ſo big, and vaunt ſo inſolently as too often they do. If they would weigh this, they would be brought to an Underſtanding of themſelves, and then (as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks) they would *know themſelves to be but Men*, Pſal. ix. 20.

Which Paſſage puts me in Mind of *Clotho*'s Words to *Parca*, (in one of *Lucian*'s Dialogues) concerning the Great ones of the World, * Crop their high Creſts, ſaith he, and take them ſeverely up, *that thereby they may know that they are Men*, that they may behave themſelves humbly, and as becomes mortal Creatures. The Reflection on Mortality ſhould aſſwage the haughty Humour of Mankind. That *Memento*, (which I ſpoke of before) *Remember that thou art a mortal Man*, which was uſed at the triumphal Solemnities among the *Romans*, was to correct and allay that Pride which they might be thought to be ſubject to at ſuch a Time, *viz.* when their Ears were filled with the Acclamations and Applauſes of the People, when they were cried up for their Valour and Conduct. The wiſe Men among the *Heathens* thought it fit to put thoſe Perſons in Mind of their frail Nature at ſuch a Seaſon, leſt they ſhould grow inſolent, and bear themſelves too high upon the Thoughts of their Power, Greatneſs, and Succeſs. So likewiſe Men are apt to pride themſelves in their *Health* and *Strength of Body*, and the firm Contexture of their Limbs and Joints; whereas it is known that a few Days Sickneſs, or ſometimes the Diſtemper of an Hour, yea ſometimes of a Minute or two, is able to ſhatter and disjoint this goodly Fabrick of the Body, and to lay it level with the Duſt. So ſome of the other Sex are apt to brag of their Beauty, the excellent Colour and Features with which they think they charm the World, yea, ſometimes too when they are but borrow'd: But the Conſideration of their Mortality ſhould check their fond Conceit of themſelves, they ſhould remember that when the Body is lodg'd Four or Five Foot under Ground, it will loſe all its raviſhing Luſtre. Colours vaniſh in the Dark, ſaith the Philoſopher. In the Regions of Death, the Land of Darkneſs, thoſe lively Tinctures cannot be ſeen, eſpecially the Paint and meretricious Varniſh will drop off, and in the Place of it ſucceed Deformity and Putrefaction. And ſo we may ſay of all other Embelliſhments and outward Excellencies, they ceaſe in the Grave, they are buried in the Duſt. Therefore let no Perſons boaſt of them, and ſhew themſelves arrogant and proud, becauſe they are now Poſſeſſors of them. They muſt leave all at Death, and deſcend into the Grave ſtript of all their former Gaieties. Let the Conſideration of this debaſe them, let the Senſe of their being fading, dying Creatures make them *humble*.

3. As this Doctrine teaches Humility, ſo it dictates *Peace* and *Love*. This was the Deſign (if we may believe *Plutarch*, who in this Matter differs from *Herodotus* beforemention'd on this Occaſion) of the *Egyptians* placing a Skeleton before their Gueſts at their Feaſts; it was not to inhanſe their Drinking and Mirth, † but to ſtir up one another to mutual Love and Friendſhip, and ſpend the ſhort Time (of which that Spectacle reminded them) in ſo good an Employment. You muſt die, you muſt leave this World, you muſt take your Lodging in the Duſt: This Conſideration ſhould be effectual to cool your Heats and Animoſities, to ſtop you in your furious Encounters with one another. *Alexander* the Great bid a Philoſopher ask of him what he would, and aſſur'd him he would grant it: Whereupon he ask'd Immortality. "How can I, being mortal, "(ſaith *Alexander*) beſtow that upon thee? Why then, (ſaid the Philoſopher) "if thou acknowledgeſt thy ſelf mortal, doſt thou not reſt in thy own King"dom, but ſetteſt thy ſelf againſt all the World, and leadeſt out vaſt Armies "to diſturb the Peace of Mankind, and fright People out of their Habita-

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* τὰς κεφαλὰς ἀπότεμνε, ϗ ἀνασκολόπιζε, ἵνα εἰδῶσιν ἄνθρωποι ὄντες.

† ἀλλὰ πρὸς φιλίαν ϗ ἀγάπησιν ἀλλήλων προτρέπεσθαι ϗ παρακαλεῖν. De *Iſid. & Oſir.*

“ tions? If thou confeſſeſt thou muſt die, why doſt thou trouble thyſelf and “ others after this Rate whilſt thou art alive? Why art thou not ſettled and “ compoſed?” The like may be ſaid of all thoſe that are turbulent and unquiet: And moreover they muſt be told this, that they ſhall ſhortly be peaceable whether they will or no: They muſt lie tame and quiet, and the weakeſt Creature may approach near to them, and have no Cauſe to be afraid of them. Now their bluſtering Fits are over, now their brisk Air and Fire are turn'd into dull and moveleſs Earth. If they would have ſeriouſly thought of this before, if they would have ſuffer'd the Conſideration of their Mortality to have dwelt with them a While, certainly it would have wrought a great Change in them, it would have curb'd their hot and quarrelſome Temper, it would have check'd their Fury, and inſpir'd their Minds with Inclinations of Peace and Unity.

It was long ſince obſerv'd concerning *Bees*, that when they are angry and ſcuffling with one an other, and thruſting out their little Stings like Daggers to engage one an other, there is an End quickly put to all the Jangling of theſe fierce Combatants by throwing a little *Duſt* upon them. This is the very Way to ſilence all your Feuds and Quarrels; ſprinkle ſome of *this* upon your ſelves, and you will leave off wrangling. Remember that you are but Duſt and Aſhes, and that you ſhall ſhortly make your Bed in the Grave; and this will quiet and allay all your fierce Motions: This will abate your Vigour and Severity to your Brethren, this will make you calm and ſedate. If you ſeriouſly think of Dying, you will not dare to paſs into the other World with your Diſſentions and Antipathies. Biſhop *Ridley*, and Biſhop *Hooper*, who formerly quarrelled with one another about *Ceremonies*, were perfectly reconciled, and became Friends when they came in Sight of Death. The Thoughts of this will make you placid, kind, and loving, or nothing will. And this muſt be your Behaviour forthwith, for you know not whether you ſhall live till To-morrow; therefore apply yourſelves to the Methods of Peace, and Love To-day.

4. You muſt all die, therefore make thence this rational Inference, that you ought not to ſet your Hearts on the Things of this tranſitory Life. It is vain and abſurd to dote on any Thing here when we may ſuddenly be removed from it. What underſtanding Traveller will load himſelf when he is on his Journey? That rich Miſer ſhewed his Folly in building his Barns up ſo high, when he was to lie low in ſo ſhort a Time. The Thoughts of Death ſhould damp our Coveteouſneſs and Ambition. The *Jewiſh Rabins* repreſent a Man ſpeaking contemptibly of the Things of this World after this Manner, How can I aſpire to great Heighth and Dignities, when perhaps To-morrow the Worm ſhall be my Siſter? As much as to ſay, the Conſideration of Mortality, and the Vanity of Man's Life will teach him to deſpiſe this World, and all the ſplendid Poſſeſſions of it. Theſe Things are made to be parted with, becauſe we are made to part from them, and to enter into an other State. And when we are entring, none of theſe Things which we now ſo admire and value will be of any Advantage to us. As *Eſau* ſaid to his Brother *Jacob*, *Behold, I am at the point of death, and what good will my birth-right do me?* So you will then ſay, We are dying, we are going the Way of all Fleſh: What Good, what Advantage can the Riches, Pleaſures, and Poſſeſſions of this World bring me at this Time? What am I the better for them all? They are not able to help and relieve me in this Hour.

Let me ſpeak more particularly, and go thro' the ſeveral Claſſes of the Things of this World. Have you Wealth and a fair Eſtate? You muſt not fondly imagine that you can take theſe with you. No: You muſt leave them to be inherited by others. Are you a Man of Arms, and have been bleſs'd with Victory and Succeſs in your martial Undertakings, and have thereby grown rich and great? Yet this will be of no Uſe to you when you come to die. *Saladine*, one of the *Turkiſh* Emperors, the greateſt Warriour of all the *Saracens*, who ſubdued all *Egypt* and *Syria*, and was famous for his warlike Feats, when he was to leave the World, commanded that his Garment which he wore next to him ſhould be carried on the Point of a Spear before his

Corps to the Grave, and order'd this to be proclaimed, Saladine *the Conqueror of the Eaſt, of all the Riches he had, carries away nothing with him but This.* And as for the numerous Forces which the greateſt Commander or General hath led into the Field, they muſt like Him ſubmit to Death's univerſal Conqueſt.

Have you the Pleaſures and Delights which this World affords? Is your ſenſual Appetite gratified with the Delicacies of Meats and Drinks? Yet know that Death will deprive you of the Senſe of all this, and there is no Banquetting in the Grave. Have you goodly Buildings, fair and ſtately Houſes, Orchards, Gardens, Walks? Yet you muſt remember that the Time is coming when the only Room allotted you ſhall be a Coffin. Have you rich Apparel, and are deck'd with the moſt glittering Ornaments? Yet Death will ruffle and diſcompoſe all theſe, and dreſs you in funeral Weeds. Have you Beauty and Comelineſs? As ſoon as Death lays his cold Hands upon you, they are turned into Loathſomeneſs and Uglineſs. Have you Honours and Preferments, and the Acclamations of the admiring World? Theſe will be inſignificant at your laſt Gaſp, for the Breath of the People will not recover yours. Are you of a good Family, and well deſcended? Know that Death obſerves no Heraldry, makes no Difference between Beggars and Nobles. Theſe are all alike in the Grave, where your worthy Anceſtors now lie, and call for you to come to them; and where you ſhall have new *Kindred*, for *you muſt ſay to corruption, Thou art my father: To the worm, Thou art my mother and my ſiſter*, Job xvii. 14. Have you kind Relations and loving Friends? They cannot ſuccour you, nay they will be forward to be rid of you, their Language will be that of *Abraham* concerning his dear *Sarah*, * *Give me a burying-place, that I may bury my dead out of my ſight.* *Gen. xxiii. 4. Laſtly, Have you Learning, Parts, Wit, Eloquence, and all that Excellency which the Skill in Arts and Sciences can furniſh you with? Yet know that Death cannot be charm'd by theſe, and there never was any Inſtance of it in the World.

If theſe Things be ſo, as certainly they are, then we have little Reaſon to magnify any of the Acquirements which I have named, any of the Enjoyments and good Things of this Life. For if they will not be ſerviceable to us at Death, they are but of little Value and Worth. When we come to die, *they* are not the Things that will ſpeak Peace to our Souls, they will be of no Benefit and Advantage then; therefore let us not prize them too much now: Let us not immoderately ſet our Affections upon them; let us be looſe and indifferent as to all theſe Things, or elſe we ſhall not die in Peace. Remember what the Great *Salmaſius* inculcated on his Death-bed, *Mind the World leſs, and God more.* Amidſt all your Profits and Gains, all your Pleaſures and Paſtimes, all your wordly Entertainments and Enjoyments ſet Death before you, and let this reſtrain your immoderate Regard and Love of them, yea let this beget in you a Contempt of them.

5. Seeing Death is the Allotment of all Mankind, and it is impoſſible to avoid it, let us ſtock ourſelves with conſolatory Principles againſt that Time, that when it arrives we may receive it joyfully. Men have uſed falſe Arts and deceitful Ways to ſupport their Spirits, when they beheld Death making its Advance toward them, and when they ſaw it juſt at their Doors: Then they have invented ſomething or other to chear and comfort themſelves. *What an excellent Artiſt do I die?* ſaid *Nero*; which he meant of his great Skill in playing on an Inſtrument; as if it were ſome Solace to him to go off the Stage Fiddling. *Auguſtus* being at the Point to die, called for his Looking-glaſs, and order'd his Hair and Beard to be comb'd, and his rivell'd Cheeks to be ſmooth'd up, as if it were ſomething to go out of the World a little ſpruce. Among the *Romans* and other Nations, they uſed to bury with them thoſe Things which were moſt delightful and pleaſant to them in their Life. They interred their Money, their rich Apparel, their Images, yea their Books with them: Thus *Dictys Cretenſis* (as *Suidas* tells us) order'd that his Hiſtory which he wrote of the *Trojan* War, ſhould be buried with him. Beſides, ſome of the *Greeks* and *Romans* put a Piece of Money into the Mouth of the dead, for *Charon*, (who, as they ſuppos'd, would demand his Fare of them) and a Morſel of Meat to ſtop *Cerberus*'s wide Throat. And among ſome of

the *Indians* at this Day, when a chief Man dies, they kill one of his Servants to go along with him into the other World, that he may not want Attendance there. Theſe are the Effects of groſs Ignorance and Superſtition, wherewith deluded Creatures have been infected.

But others, who were ſomething wiſer than theſe, comforted themſelves at Death after an other Rate: They alleviated their Grief, and overcame their Fear, by urging this upon their Minds, That Death is the common Lot of all, and therefore it is unreaſonable to repine and murmur at it. We muſt travel the High-way, ſay they, which all before us have paſs'd. They that are dead, do but lead the Way, and we muſt all follow them. This is very true, and the Conſideration of it may in ſome Meaſure ſuppreſs Men's penſive and diſtracted Thoughts concerning their latter End. Again, ſome of the Great Moraliſts endeavour'd to antidote themſelves againſt the fearful Apprehenſions of Death by ſuggeſting, that as it is an End of our Lives, ſo it is of all our Miſeries, and therefore ought to be embraced with Patience and Contentment.

But alas, theſe are poor and ſorry Conſolations againſt Death, and ſuch as cannot be ſatisfactory to rational and deliberate Minds. For what Comfort can it be to a Paſſenger to travel in the Road, tho' it be common, when he knows he ſhall be knock'd on the Head, or have his Throat cut in it? And as for Death's putting a Period to all Miſery, if we ſpeak of bad Men, it rather begins then, for the Evils of this Life are nothing in Compariſon of thoſe which they ſhall feel in an other World. Theſe Suggeſtions therefore will never adminiſter a true and ſolid Support to Men's Minds: Wherefore there muſt be ſome other and ſome better, which belong only to good Men, and they are ſuch as theſe. Death which is ſo terrible in itſelf, is render'd pleaſant and welcome by the Death of *Jeſus*, who ſhed his Blood on the Croſs to take away our Sins. And thus Death which was a Curſe, is turn'd into the greateſt and moſt deſirable Bleſſing. It is now become an Entrance into the Place of Endleſs Joy and Happineſs, where there is an everlaſting Ceſſation of all Sin and Miſery. This is the alone Purchaſe of Chriſt Jeſus our Saviour, who hath conquered Death and the Grave, and hath brought Life and Immortality to Light. And we having this Light, may ſolace ourſelves not only at our own Departure, but at that of others. We are aſſured, that if our Friends and Relatives die in the Lord, they are bleſſed, being pronounced ſo by the Holy Spirit, Rev. xiv. 13. *And they ceaſe from their labours, and their works follow them.* Death is their ſafe Port, where they are ſecured from the Dangers of that rough Sea where they lately rode. And ſhall we grieve and lament that our Friends are out of the Storm, and ſafely come into their Haven? Death brings them to their Father's Houſe, even to their dear Lord and Maſter, and leaves them in his Embraces. Thus it is our greateſt Friend, and doth us the beſt Office imaginable, it puts us into that State which is moſt eligible, becauſe it conducts us to Chriſt, the Author and Spring of our Happineſs.

Here now is Matter of true and ſubſtantial Comfort, of laſting Content and Satisfaction. Wherefore let us not be afraid *to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better*, (as the Apoſtle ſaith,) unſpeakably and infinitely better than to be here below. Death calls us hence to the Church triumphant, to the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect, to the glorious Aſſembly of Saints and Angels, and to our Saviour himſelf, whoſe Preſence makes Heaven. Why then ſhould we be unwilling to take our Leave of this World, and to aſcend to the Manſions of Glory? Why ſhould we not cheerfully bid adieu to our Friends who ſtand about us weeping? But if they be holy and religious Perſons, they ſhould rather grieve and weep becauſe they can't go along with us, they ſhould ſhed Tears becauſe they are forc'd to ſtay behind in ſo bad a World.

6thly and *Laſtly*, (to comprehend all in ſhort,) Live as thoſe who know and profeſs this common Truth, that All muſt die. The *Epicure*'s Argument was, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die.* But the *Wiſe Man*'s Argument and holy Logick is quite different, *Whatſoever thou findeſt to do, do it with all thy*

thy might, for there is no wiſdom nor operation in the place whither thou goeſt. So then *Death* doth not bid us play and loiter, and ſpend our Time idly and vainly, but calls to us to work, and that with great Earneſtneſs and Vigour; and it calls to the moſt important Work in the World, which is to work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling, and to ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate. We may imagine it addreſſing itſelf to us in thoſe very Words which were written over the Effigies of a deceaſed *Egyptian* King, * *Look upon me, and learn to be religious.* The Contemplation of Death ſhould make all Men vertuous and holy, ſhould excite them to a conſcientious Diſcharge of their Duty. The Thoughts of leaving the World, put St. *Peter* upon the faithful Diſpenſing of his miniſterial Office, 2 *Pet.* i. 13, 14. *I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to ſtir you up, by putting you in remembrance: knowing that ſhortly I muſt put off this my tabernacle.* And the ſame Effect ſhould it have on all Men of what Degree and Quality ſoever: It ſhould cauſe them to reflect on their paſt Lives, and repent of their Miſcarriages, and it ſhould make them very exact in all their religious Performances for the future. Let us make it our Buſineſs now to purchaſe that which will be ſerviceable to us when this Life is at an End, ſomething that will bear us Company into the other World; and that is a having our Part in the Bleſſed Jeſus, a being reconciled to the incenſed Majeſty of Heaven by the Blood of the Lamb ſlain from the Foundation of the World, an effectual Application of the Righteouſneſs and Merits of this merciful Redeemer, by a lively and operative Faith, an entire Reſigning of ourſelves to the Will of Him who hath bought us with his precious Blood. He hath done wonderful Things for us, beyond our Thoughts, beyond our Expectations: He requires we ſhould heartily believe in him, and live in the Practice of his Holy Laws. This therefore let us betake ourſelves to.

And to excite and quicken our Endeavours, let us remember that this which I have thus ſet before you as your main Buſineſs, is the only Thing that will be of Uſe to you when you are leaving the World. Which great and plain Truth, give me Leave to repreſent to you in the Words of an excellent Perſon, I mean that worthy Man Judge *Hale*, who thus ſpeaks; "My Riches and my Honours, (ſaith he) my Pleaſures and my Profits, my "Gallantry and my Policy, which I made much Reckoning of in my Life-"time, I ſhall perceive to be but Vanity at the beſt, and ſet no Eſteem up-"on them when Death comes: But Piety, and Prayers, and Charity, and "Intereſt in God, and in the Merits of Chriſt, and the Promiſes of the Goſ-"pel, I ſhall then ſee to be of greateſt Value, and accordingly prize them: "Theſe I ſhall carry with me into the ſucceeding World; but all my worldly "Comforts, when I paſs thro' this ſtrait Gate of Death, I ſhall leave behind "me, and never make Uſe of them, or take Comfort in them any more. "Only the Good or Evil of my paſt Life will ſtick upon me unto all Eter-"nity." If a Man of ſo great Underſtanding, Sobriety, and Conſideration, and one that was in ſo great Place and Eminence, and had thereby great Temptations to biaſs his Thoughts and Words to the contrary, acknowledg'd and openly profeſs'd his hearty Belief of this Truth, you may rely upon what he ſaith, you may firmly perſuade yourſelves that your good Works, and they only, ſhall follow you. All other Things take their Leave of you, and vaniſh; but theſe remain and go with you to Heaven. Wherefore you are infinitely concern'd that you ſee that your Works and Actions in this Life be ſuch as will be accepted in an other.

An other Thing which I will remind you of is, that as you have a very great Task and Work ſet you, ſo you have but a little Time to perform it. Life is ſhort, but the Art of Living well is long, and will take up a great deal of Deliberation. Wherefore begin betimes, that you may diſpatch your Work before the Night comes, when it will be too late to do it. Death ſtays not any Man's Leiſure, therefore repent and turn unto God preſently: Like the wiſe Virgins, be ready againſt the Bridegroom's Coming: Provide for his Return, that you may enter with him into the Bride-chamber. Prepare yourſelves for your Departure, and all the great Iſſues and Conſequences of it. In Time, fit yourſelves for Eternity, that is, endeavour to live holy Lives here, that you may through Chriſt's Merits partake of the glorious Inheritance hereafter. O that you would think of the exceeding great Danger that that Man is in who is yet in his Sins, and continues in his Impenitency, which is altogether inconſiſtent with the Favour of God and future Happineſs.

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* Ἐς ἐμὲ τις ὁρέων εὐσεβὴς ἔστω. *Herodot.* l. 2.

But you will ſay, that although a Man hath not lived well, yet he may derive ſome Comfort hence, that he heartily *purpoſes* to lead a new Life. I, but how many of theſe *Purpoſes* and *Reſolves* hath he broken already? And how then can there be any Comfort, any Safety in this? He that hath been ſo often falſe to God and his own Promiſes, may be ſo again. Beſides, there may be but little Time or Leiſure to repent, as you ſhould, on a Sick-Bed: Therefore it is unſafe, yea it is extremely dangerous, and horribly preſumptuous to defer and protract your turning unto God. When your End approaches, you may have Employment enough of an other Nature. Your Sickneſs, your Pain, your Faintings, or your Diſtractions about your worldly Concerns, may divert you from attending on this great Work. The Phyſician (it is likely) will be more valued than the Divine; the Medicines of the Former will perhaps wholly exclude the Prayers and pious Applications of the Latter. Is it not then very perillous, think you, to delay your Repentance, and to talk of performing this main Buſineſs on your Death-Bed? O! Let not ſuch fond and unreaſonable Thoughts come into your Minds. Now, whilſt it is called to Day, and whilſt you have Time, and Strength, and Underſtanding, and Memory, call your Sins to Remembrance, heartily bewail them, condemn yourſelf for them, with Shame and Hatred mention them before God, and earneſtly implore his Pardon for the Sake and Merits of his Son Jeſus.

It was admirable Advice which *Seneca* gave, Conſider (ſaith he) * how excellent, how comely a Thing it is to conſummate your Life before Death comes, and then to wait all the remaining Part of your Days 'till your Change comes. Let us learn this excellent Leſſon, and in a higher and more exalted Senſe than this Moraliſt meant it. Finiſh your Life before Death, by fighting the good Fight of Faith, and by laying hold on eternal Life: And then be always in Readineſs to receive your laſt Summons. Be ever upon your Watch, as Servants that know not when their Lord will come. Still be employed in thoſe Works which he hath ſet you about, that how ſuddenly ſoever he ſhall come upon you, you may not be ſurprized, but being found Ready may be received by him into his eternal Kingdom. Briefly, take Care that * your Sins and Vices die before you: Take Care that all your Work be done before you are called out of this World. Whatever you neglect or forget, do not omit to fit yourſelves by Faith and Obedience, and a holy Life for a comfortable Death: And be ſure you act this Part *well*, which you ſhall never act but *Once*.

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* *Quam pulchra res ſit conſummare vitam ante mortem; dein expectare ſecurum reliquam temporis ſui partem.* Sen. Epiſt. 31.

* *Hoc circa diem mortis præſta, moriantur aute te vitia.* Sen. Epiſt. 17.

The *Narrow Way*, and the *Broad Way*.

A
Practical DISCOURSE:

SHEWING

What are the *Hindrances* and *Impediments* of Godlineſs: And what are the effectual *Helps* to promote it.

Matt. vii. 13, 14.

Enter ye in at the ſtrait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be that go in thereat; becauſe ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Luke xiii. 24.

Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate: for many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.

WE are all juſtly ſaid to be * *Travellers* and *Pilgrims*, becauſe this *Life* itſelf is no other than a *Journey* or *Travelling* thro' this World. There are in it Two remarkable *Ways* or *Roads*, the one Narrow, the other Broad; and every Man in the World treads in one of theſe; that is, he either takes the Road which leads to Heaven and Happineſs, or that which terminates in Hell and Deſtruction. The Reaſon why the Former of theſe is called the *Strait Gate*, and the *Narrow Way*, is, becauſe it is hard to enter in at it, and to walk in it. To inſiſt in vertuous Courſes, and to attain at length to everlaſting Bliſs, is no eaſy Achievement. To be ſaved, is a very

* *Gen.* xlvii. 9. *Pſalm* xxxix. 12. *Heb.* xi. 13. 1 *Pet.* i. 17.

difficult Matter. There muſt be great Pains and Labour in getting through the Gate. And therefore the Generality of Men ſhun this Path, and greedily chooſe an *other*, which is here ſtiled by our Saviour the *Wide Gate*, and the *Broad Way*, namely, becauſe it is a Way of Looſeneſs and Licentiouſneſs, and becauſe it is an open and beaten Way, and Multitudes of Paſſengers flock to it: And likewiſe, becauſe it is ſo eaſy a Matter to enter into Hell, and to be utterly ruined and damned: For this Reaſon the Way is ſaid to be wide and broad. But here our Saviour and bleſſed Inſtructor bids us leave the former Way, and come into the latter, which, tho' it be trod but by few, yet it is a Safe Way, and leads directly to Bliſs and Happineſs, and ends in Life and Glory. *Enter ye in*, ſaith he, *at the ſtrait gate*, &c.

In which Words you may obſerve theſe Two general Parts. 1. An Exhortation to an important Duty, *Enter ye in at the ſtrait gate*. 2*dly*, The Reaſons and Arguments to inforce the Practice of this Duty, and they are Two: The Firſt is taken from the Eaſineſs of the contrary Performance, and the Multitude of thoſe that periſh by it. *For wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be that go in thereat.* The Second Argument is taken from the Difficulty of this Duty, and the Paucity of thoſe who perform it aright, and conſequently attain to Life and Happineſs. *Becauſe ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it.* From the Words, I will deduce theſe Three *Propoſitions*, and diſtinctly inſiſt upon them. The 1ſt is this, That the Way to true Holineſs, and to Heaven and Happineſs, is *more difficult* than is generally imagined. The 2d (which indeed is the Conſequent of the former) is this, That but *few* Perſons are ſaved, and *many* are damned and undone for ever. And then the 3d Propoſition, (which is the Reſult of both the former, and which is grounded on the firſt Words in the Text) is, That it ought to be our *great Care* and *Concern*, that we be of the Number of thoſe few that are ſaved, that we enter into the Way of Happineſs. This is implied in the ſerious Exhortation in the Front of our Saviour's Words, *Enter ye in*, and in that parallel Place, *Luke* xiii. 24. *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate.*

I begin with the 1ſt Propoſition, which is this, It is far more hard and difficult to be truly holy, and to enter into Heaven and Happineſs, than Men commonly imagine. This is founded upon theſe poſitive Words of our Saviour, *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads to life.* And in *Luke* xiii. 24. *Many will ſeek to enter in, but ſhall not be able.* This tells you how great the Difficulty is of Entring into the Way of Holineſs and Happineſs.

But, before I proceed, I will anſwer one *Objection* which may prejudice all that I ſhall ſay in Purſuit of this Propoſition. Doth not Chriſt himſelf ſay, *My yoke is eaſy, and my burden is light?* And what is the Meaning of this, but that Chriſtianity is not difficult, and conſequently the Way of Godlineſs and Bleſſedneſs is not ſo, which ſeems to be contradictory to what I have aſſerted, yea to what our bleſſed Saviour here poſitively affirms? It is requiſite therefore, (before I go any further) that I let you ſee how theſe Two are reconcileable.

You muſt know then, that tho' Chriſt's Yoke and the Way of Holineſs be eaſy, yet it is alſo true, that the *Entrance* into that Way is ſtrait and difficult. When a Man *firſt* looks towards Heaven, he meets with that which ſcares and affrights him: He finds that he is beſet with Difficulties, and ſurrounded with Hardſhips. The Way of Godlineſs to a Perſon that hath been viciouſly diſpoſed, is uneaſy and ſtrait. He is, as it were, in Bonds and Fetters; like *Bajazet* in his Cage he frets and rages, and almoſt knocks out his Brains againſt the Bars. Till the corrupt Nature of Man be tamed and brought under, the Way of Holineſs will ſeem very heavy and clogging, very troubleſome and afflictive to the Soul: Which is well expreſs'd by the Apocryphal Writer, in *Ecclus.* iv. 17. where, telling us how Wiſdom deals with a Man, he ſets it forth thus, *At firſt ſhe will walk with him by crooked ways, and bring fear and dread upon him, and torment him with her diſcipline, until ſhe may truſt his ſoul, and try him by her laws.* And it was the Senſe of the moſt improved Moraliſts, That the Beginning of Religion and Vertue is accompanied with Hardſhips. Thus one of them expreſſes this Matter excellently. * " As Vertue, ſaith he, when it is once " admitted into the Soul, and entirely embraced by it, is " kept and retain'd with Eaſe, and indeed cannot well go " from us; ſo the firſt Admiſſion of it is attended with Difficulty, becauſe the Soul of Man is ſo weak and ſhallow, " that it is afraid of that which it hath not yet had Experience of." It is no Wonder then, that a vertuous and godly Life is unpleaſant at the firſt. But it is certain, that after Grace hath got Poſſeſſion, Religion becomes eaſy, whereas before it was hard. And this Eaſineſs proceeds from the very Nature of a *Habit*, which is a Faculty got by Uſe, ſo that a Promptitude and Facility go along with it. But it is quite otherwiſe with the Way of Wickedneſs, as the Son of *Sirach* ſpeaks, *The way of ſinners is made plain with ſtones*, (*i. e.* at firſt it is ſmooth and eaſy) *but at the end thereof is the pit of hell.* Eccl. xxi. 10.

Again, When Chriſt ſaith, that his Yoke is eaſy, and his Burden light, he ſpeaks of Godlineſs as it is in *itſelf*, and as 'tis conſider'd in it's *own Nature*; and thus without doubt it is very eaſy and pleaſant. Even of the *moral Vertues*, *Seneca* could ſay, and that moſt truly, † " The Way " to Vertue is not rough and difficult; you may come at " it upon even Ground: For what is more eaſy than a meek " and quiet Mind? And what is more vexatious and troubleſome than a wrathful Spirit? Chaſtity is attended with " Leiſure and Eaſe, but Luſt and Lewdneſs bring a Hurry " and Diſorder with them: And in brief, all Vertue is " cheap and facile, in Compariſon of Vice, which is chargeable and difficult." So true is that of the *Greek* Father, ‡ *Wickedneſs is more hardly digeſted than Vertue.* Sin is more uneaſy than Godlineſs can poſſibly be upon any Account.

Again, *This* may be ſaid (as is well ſuggeſted by one of the Ancients) || " Vertue and Godlineſs ſeem difficult, not " becauſe of their own Nature, but by Reaſon of the tranſcendent Sloth and Negligence of thoſe that will not apply " themſelves to them in good Earneſt." Religion is reproach'd as a harſh and difficult Thing, when indeed it is the idle and ſlothful Nature of Men which repreſents it to be ſuch: And they call Religion a *ſtrait Gate*, becauſe they are reſolv'd they will *take no Pains* to enter.

Thus in ſhort I have aſſoyl'd the ſeeming Contradiction which was between our Saviour's Words here, and in *Mat.* xi. 30. *His yoke is eaſy, and his burden is light, and yet the way to heaven is narrow, and the gate is ſtrait.* Both theſe are to be underſtood in *diverſe Reſpects*, and upon *different Accounts*, and ſo there is no real Oppoſition between them: But the Propoſition which I firſt tender'd to you, ſtands firm and impregnable, *viz.* That the Way to Heaven and Happineſs is more difficult than is imagined. To be really vertuous and religious, to walk and continue in the Way that leads to endleſs Bliſs, is not ſo eaſy a Matter as is uſually thought. In plain Terms 'tis very hard to be ſaved.

Canaan was a Type of Heaven, and the *Wilderneſs* an Emblem of this World What Difficulties did the poor *Iſraelites* go through in their Forty Years Travelling in that howling Deſart? And afterwards how many Nations were there to ſubdue, how many potent Enemies to grapple with before they were ſettled in the Land of Promiſe? This repreſents to us the great Hazards and Perils which all thoſe muſt encounter who travel towards the *New Jeruſalem*, who will couragiouſly follow Chriſt Jeſus, and own his Cauſe, and faithfully diſcharge their Duty. You read in *Prov.* ii. 2, *&c.* what is the Way to true Wiſdom, namely, to *cry after her, to lift up our voice for her, to ſeek her as ſilver, to ſearch for her as for hid Treaſures*, i. e. to take Pains, to ſweat and labour, and to undertake the moſt difficult Things. In the Stile of the New Teſtament, Chriſtianity, or performing the Duties of the Chriſtian Religion, is compared to the *Agoniſtical Exerciſes* among the *Grecians*; it is called

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* *Quemadmodum Virtutes retentæ exire nòn poſſunt, faciliſq; earundem tutela eſt, ita initium ad illas ingrediendi arduum: Quia hoc primum imbecillæ mentis atq; ægræ eſt, formidare inexperta.* Sen. Ep. 52.

† *Non eſt arduum in Virtutes, & aſperum iter; de plano adeuntur. Quid otioſius eſt quiete animi? Quid Irâ laborioſius? Vacat pudicitia, libido occupatiſſima eſt: omnium deniq; virtutum tutela facilior eſt; Vitia magnò coluntur.* De Ira.

‡ Δυσκολώτερον ἡ κακία τῆς ἀρετῆς. *Chryſoſt.*

|| Ἡ ἀρετὴ δύσκολος εἶναι δοκεῖ, οὐ παρὰ τὴν οἰκείαν φύσιν, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὴν τῶν μετιέναι αὐτὴν μὴ ἐθελόντων ἀνυπέρβλητον ῥαθυμίαν. *Ibid. Peluſ.* Ep. lib. 2.

led Fighting, Striving, Running, Labouring. St. *Paul* tells us he *travail'd in birth* of the *Galatians*, which denotes to us the extraordinary Labour and indefatigable Pains of that holy Man, in order to the Delivery of thoſe People from their Sins, in order to the Salvation of their Souls. And certainly then *they themſelves* ſhould be as laborious and careful in working out their own Salvation, they ſhould ſpare no Pains about it. Yet after all that the moſt righteous Perſons can do, *they ſhall ſcarcely be ſaved*, 1 Pet. iv. 18. They ſhall certainly and undoubtedly, but yet ſcarcely be ſaved. It ſhall go very hard with them, they muſt endure many Difficulties, they muſt meet with many Obſtacles and Impediments of their Salvation. The Way of Sin and Vice is an eaſy Deſcent, but to recover ourſelves, to direct our Steps towards Vertue and Godlineſs (which is a riſing Ground, and a difficult Aſcent) and to climb up thence to the Regions of Bleſſedneſs, This, This is exceeding hard and laborious.

I will then in the next Place give you a *particular Account* of the *Difficulty* of this Undertaking. I will let you ſee this diſtinctly *how* it comes to paſs, that it is ſo hard a Thing to be ſaved. This happens thus upon this twofold Account. 1. By Reaſon of the great Things which are to be *done* by us in order to Salvation. 2. Becauſe of the great Things which are to be *ſuffer'd* by us. 3. (And which comprehends the former) in Regard of the great and powerful *Enemies* that we are to encounter with.

Firſt, I ſay, conſider the Things that *are to be done*, and then you will conclude that the Gate to Heaven and Happineſs is a *ſtrait* Gate, and that the Way is a *narrow* Way, *i. e.* that it is *very difficult*. How hard is our *firſt Entrance* into the Way of Godlineſs (as I have intimated already that the main Difficulty is there)? We are all out of the Way, we are gone aſtray like loſt Sheep; whence it is hard to hit the Right Path, to ſet our Feet into the true Way. This narrow Path is not eaſily found, becauſe there are many Turnings and Windings, many By-paths of Errour and Deluſion. And when you are entring into the right Way, you will be affrighted and diſmay'd, you will be ready to turn back and revolt. The Work of Converſion and Salvation is accompanied with Terrors and Anguiſh, with great Grief and unſpeakable Dolours. The *Spirit of Bondage to fear*, is to make Way for the *Spirit of Adoption*, and the kindly Principle of Love. You muſt be wounded before you be healed; you muſt be brought low and lie in the Duſt, before you be raiſed up. You muſt groan and lament, before you lift up your Voice with Rejoicing and Exultation. You muſt ſearch and try your Hearts, and examine your Ways, and rifle your Conſciences, and judge and condemn yourſelves, before you can be acquitted and abſolved. In ſhort, you muſt be led even by the *Gates of Hell*, that you may effectually arrive at the ſtrait Gate of Heaven.

But not only the *Entrance* into the Way is hard, but when you are in it, you'll find it uneven and uneaſy; the Progreſs and Continuance in the Way will prove difficult. Tho' upon the Accounts before-named, it may be ſaid to be eaſy, yet for other Reaſons it will appear that nothing is harder. Many a weary Step is to be taken; there are diverſe long Stages in this Journey, and you muſt paſs thro' them all: But you'll find that it is no eaſy Thing to do ſo. Let it be conſider'd, I pray, what a deal of Work you have to do, how great your Task is, how manifold thoſe Duties are, which you ought to perform towards *God* more immediately, towards your *Neighbours* (whether Superiors or Inferiors, Fellow-Chriſtians, or others that are without,) and likewiſe towards *your ſelves*. In ſundry Capacities you are to be employ'd. You have enough to fill up All the Spaces of your Life. You have no Time to laviſh and ſquander away. You muſt muſter all your Forces, call in all Aids and Aſſiſtances, do what you do with all your Vigour, for you have a very difficult Task before you. It is hard (you know) to draw a long Line, exactly ſtraight. It is difficult to live circumſpectly and accurately, and withal to perſevere in it.

But what Kind of Performances are they, you will ſay, which are ſo difficult? I anſwer, firſt, All the Precepts of the moral Law are your indiſpenſable Duty. And St. *James* tells you, that if you are guilty of the Breach of one of them, you are guilty of the Violation of them all, *Jam.* ii. 10. Is not this a *hard* Saying? And you will be ready to ſay, *Who can bear it?* But if you ſincerely reſolve to be *Chriſtians indeed*, you muſt bear it, and you muſt ſet yourſelves in good Earneſt to the performing of this hard Task. Nay, your Task is *yet greater* than what I have hitherto repreſented it to be: For beſides the ſtrict Obſervance of the moral Law, Chriſt (our Lawgiver) hath added ſome new Precepts, or very much enhanſed and augmented ſome of the old ones, ſo that they look as if they were newly inſtituted by him. What ſay you to ſuch Duties as theſe? Namely,

Firſt, *Evangelical Faith*, which is a hearty Aſſenting to all that God hath ſaid (ſeem it never ſo improbable or impoſſible) an entire Compliance with the Terms and Conditions of the Goſpel, and a firm Truſting on the Merits of Jeſus, for Life and Salvation.

Secondly, Such a *Repentance* as the Goſpel requires, a deep Remorſe and Sorrow for Sin, becauſe it is contrary to God's pure Nature, and becauſe it is ſo high an Offence againſt him; a Hating of all Wickedneſs becauſe he hates it, and a Shewing this Hatred in our Lives and Actions by ſhunning whatever we know to be Evil, and by a conſcientious Practiſing of all that we are convinced is our Duty.

Thirdly, A free and voluntary *Paſſing by of Offences*, a hearty *Forgiving* our Enemies and thoſe that have done us Injuries. How hard do Men find it to obſerve that evangelical Precept in *Rom.* xii. 19, 20, 21. *Dearly beloved*, (ſaith the Apoſtle) *avenge not yourſelves, but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay it. Therefore if thy enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirſt give him drink: for in ſo doing thou ſhalt heap coals of fire on his head*, (thou ſhalt either help forward his Converſion, and *kindle* as it were a better Life in him, or by thy exceſſive Charity and Flames of Love to him thou ſhalt render him at leaſt inexcuſable.) *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.* Is not *this* very *harſh* to Fleſh and Blood? Are ſuch Performances as theſe obſerved generally to be *pleaſant and eaſy?* I trow not. To pray for thoſe that curſe you, to bleſs thoſe who revile you, to deal kindly with thoſe that perſecute you, to love thoſe that hate you and deſpitefully uſe you, to be charitable and obliging to thoſe who have been cruel and unmerciful to you, and to heap Kindneſs on thoſe who load you with Injuries, This certainly is one of the *difficult Tasks* which your Religion enjoins you.

Fourthly, To *reprove Sin* in others, altho' thereby you are ſure to indamage yourſelves, *i. e.* to loſe the Friendſhip of thoſe Perſons, whom you rebuke for their Offences, and to incur their Anger and Diſpleaſure (which ſometimes may prove very miſchievous to you;) to diſcharge this Chriſtian Duty in ſuch perillous Circumſtances is no eaſy Work; or elſe certainly it would be oftner performed than we ſee it is: And yet this is a Duty which you cannot be excuſed from.

Fifthly, *Not to be aſhamed* of your Profeſſion, but to *confeſs* Chriſt before Men, and to own and openly acknowledge your Faith even when the *Doing* ſo is attended with great Danger, and may bring you into Diſtreſs, and occaſion your Suffering, and even the Laying-Down of your Life. This, I may juſtly reckon as an other *difficult Task* that is incumbent on you. Here is a very *Strait Gate*.

Sixthly, *Mortification* and *Self-Denial* are no eaſy Performances. To renounce our choiceſt and our deareſt Sins, to pluck out the Right Eye, and to cut off the Right Hand; this is hard if any Thing be hard. Obſerve *how* our Saviour *expreſſeth it*; he bids *us* do this Execution; *we* muſt cut off our right Hands, and pluck out our own right Eyes. Indeed to let *others* ſerve us thus, to ſaw off our Hand, or pull out our Eye is very hard, and we know not how to ſuffer it; but to do this *ourſelves* is yet harder, and our very Nature recoils at the Mentioning of it. But thus Chriſt ſets forth our Duty, you muſt do that which you are moſt averſe to, you muſt oppoſe your own Will and Appetites, and go counter to your moſt eager Inclinations and Deſires. You muſt manfully bear up againſt all Oppoſition; you muſt ſwim againſt the Stream, you muſt renounce thoſe Sins which are moſt in Faſhion, you muſt live uprightly in a crooked and perverſe Generation. You are to remember this, that you muſt not act as you pleaſe, you muſt not think, ſpeak, and do what you will, but your Will is to be regulated by the divine Pleaſure, and you are to be confined unto that.

Laſtly, Remember how *large* and *extenſive Chriſtianity* is. It governs our whole Lives and Converſations, and commands us to behave ourſelves in all Things as becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt, and bids us take his Laws for the Rule of all our Enterprizes and Actions. It actuates both Soul and Body, and influences all the Exertments of both. It forbids all *Sins*, and ſeverely enjoins all *Good*. It ſtrictly commands that we be not revengeful, nor paſſionate, nor malicious, nor luſtful, nor proud, nor covetous, nor intemperate, nor prophane, nor hypocritical. It hath within its Compaſs and Circle *many* and various Duties; it offers to us *ſundry* Laws and Rules for the governing of our Lives, and it charges us to adhere to them, and to ſcan all we do by them. Yea, and it not only ſets a *right Rule* before us, but it propoſes a *right and due End*, and commands us to look up to *that*, and direct all our Actions to it. If you will be pleaſed to conſider all theſe Things ſeverally, I doubt not, but the Propoſition which I firſt named, and am now treating of, will appear to be an undeniable Truth. If our Religion contains *all this* which I have mentioned, (and aſſuredly it contains in it *much more*), then certainly the Way to Heaven may deſervedly be called *Narrow*, and the Gate that leads to it *very Strait*. It is harder to arrive at Happineſs than Men generally imagine.

And if I ſhould add this after all, *viz.* that a *long inveterate Cuſtom* of ſinning hath ſeized on a great Part of the World, (even that which is called *Chriſtian*,) then it will yet more abundantly appear, that it is more difficult to be ſaved than is commonly thought. That is an afrighting Text in *Jer.* xiii. 23. *Can the Ethiopian change his ſkin, or the Leopard his ſpots? then may ye alſo do good, that are accuſtomed to do evil.* The converting and changing of ſuch Perſons is but *waſhing a Black-Moor*, Blanching his ſable Skin, and ſtripping him of the dark Livery which Nature gave him, which is a proverbial Speech for *Labour in Vain.* So *hard*, yea, almoſt *impoſſible* is it to expel Nature; for ſuch is a *long Cuſtom.* When Sin claims Poſſeſſion, and holds as it were by Preſcription, 'tis difficult to eject it. Abiding in Sin makes Mens Caſe almoſt deſperate and irrecoverable. When Sin is grown chronical, they find it very hard to cure. After a long Continuance in a vicious Life, if ever they turn to the Way of Vertue, it muſt be with great Difficulty. For Sins being often reiterated grow into Habits, and then they are locked up faſt, they cannot ſtir and help themſelves. The Devil leads them captive at his Pleaſure, and doth what he will with them, and they are his contented Slaves and Drudges. Their Conſciences now grow ſtupid and ſenſeleſs, and they have brought them to that Paſs that they can neither ſpeak nor feel. Or perhaps the very Hurry and Tumult of Vice, which is accompanied with Noiſe and Diſtraction, will not ſuffer them to liſten to the Voice of Conſcience, tho' it ſtrives to open its Mouth wide. So that there can be no greater Puniſhment to a Sinner than to repeat his Faults often, becauſe this makes him hard and impenitent. When 'tis come to this, all his Strength is gone, and tho' he would repent and amend his Life, he cannot. Thus on all Accounts you have it proved, that the *Gate is ſtrait*, that it is *exceeding hard* to be true Chriſtians and to reach Heaven. And yet all this While I have been arguing only from *one Topick*, *viz.* the many Things that are to be *done* by us in Order to true Holineſs here, and the Attaining of a bleſſed Life hereafter. There is a great Deal *to be done*, and *that* ſufficiently manifeſts how *hard* it is to be ſaved.

In the next Place the *Things that are to be ſuffered* in the Way to Heaven muſt be conſidered; and thence alſo it will be manifeſt how difficult it is to go thither. There are Temptations and worldly Inconveniences, Hazards, Troubles, Loſſes, Perſecutions, and even violent Death ſometimes, which are the Attendants of Religion, and *theſe* muſt needs render it *uneaſy* and *irkſome.* Religion and a good Conſcience are always hateful to the Men of the World, and they ever ſtudied to wreak their Malice againſt the Profeſſors of them. At the very firſt Setting up of the World this was diſcerned. *Cain* firſt hated, and then killed *Abel. Iſmael* perſecuted *Iſaac*, *Eſau* purſued *Jacob*, *Moſes* had a *Pharaoh*, *Elias* an *Ahab*, *David* a *Saul.* Yea, hear how this Latter bemoans himſelf, *They that hate me without a cauſe, are more than the hairs of my head. For thy ſake I have born reproach; ſhame hath covered my face. I am become a ſtranger to my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children: when I wept and chaſtened my ſoul with faſting, that was to my reproach: they that ſit in the gate, ſpeak againſt me, and I was the ſong of the drunkards. Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heavineſs; I looked for ſome to take pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none,* Pſal. lxix. 4, &c. Peruſe that Martyrology of the *Old Teſtament* compiled by St. *Paul* in his xi*th* Chapter of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* Verſe 36, &c. *They had trials of cruel mockings and ſcourgings, yea moreover of bonds and impriſonment; they were ſtoned, they were ſawn aſunder, were tempted, were ſlain with the ſword; they wandered about in ſheep-ſkins, and goat-ſkins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy; they wandered in deſerts and in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth.* Here was the *Strait Gate*, here was the *Narrow Way.*

And it hath not been otherwiſe under *Chriſtianity*; the Church hath wandered in the Wilderneſs, and hath been beſet there with Enemies; it hath been reviled and perſecuted by them, and hath been conſtantly exerciſed with Trials, Difficulties, and Troubles. This was it which *Paul* and *Barnabas* acquainted all the Chriſtians with, whom they met in their Paſſages through divers Countries and Cities, *We muſt thro' much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*, Acts xiv. 22. *Yea, and all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus ſhall ſuffer perſecution*, ſaith the Former of thoſe holy Men, 2 *Tim.* iii. 12. Are you Perſons that fear God and walk in his Ways, do you live according to the excellent Rules of Chriſt Jeſus? then you muſt expect the ſame Uſage. The Wicked will preſently ſet themſelves againſt you, you ſhall be mocked and reviled; Shame and Contumely, Affronts and Injuries ſhall be your Portion. You muſt be expoſed to evil Tongues, and violent Hands; you muſt make your Way through whole Troops of Enemies, you muſt encounter all Manner of Hardſhips, you muſt weather out many a Storm; in brief, you muſt *ſuffer*, and yet you muſt be *patient* and *meek*; you muſt be faithful and conſtant unto the End, and you muſt not quit your Religion and Conſcience notwithſtanding all the Hardſhips you meet with. And this (if I am not miſtaken) is no *eaſy Thing.* This cannot but make the Gate to be *Strait*, and the Way to be *Narrow.* And indeed this is the more genuine and proper Import of the Word, which is here tranſlated *Narrow*; if you exactly render it, it is * *Afflicted.* The *Narrow Way* which we muſt go thro' is the *oppreſſed* and *perſecuted* Way; it is made ſtrait and difficult by Afflictions, Calamities and Croſſes. Aſſure yourſelves of this, that you muſt ſuffer on all Sides, if you reſolve to be truly pious. If you travel in this Road, the Rain and the Wind will be often in your Faces; you will meet with many a Tempeſt and Hurricane. Tell me then, whether the Way to Heaven be not *difficult.*

* τεθλιμμένη.

Thirdly, You will grant it to be ſo, if you conſider what *ſpiritual Enemies* we are to grapple with, namely, the *evil and infernal Spirits*, who are many in Number, great in Power, and to be dreaded for their Cunning and Policy, but eſpecially for their Spite and Malice. They continually aſſault us, they perpetually ſollicit us to revolt from our Profeſſion, to renounce all Care of Religion, and to live as without God in the World. They daily ſet before us ſuch Objects as they know will be moſt pleaſing to us, and moſt powerful to ſeduce and delude us; theſe ſubtle and ſpiteful Spirits make Uſe of all Wiles and Stratagems, all Engines and Weapons to deſtroy us. They way-lay us in our Eating and Drinking, in our Waking and Sleeping, in our Affairs at Home and Abroad, in our Buſineſs and in our Diverſions, and in every State and Condition of Life: Which muſt needs make our Salvation very hazardous.

Again, the *World* is an other Enemy we muſt combat with; and how many Thouſands are there that are daily conquered and carried captive by this powerful Foe? How do all the *World*'s Vanities and Fooleries prevail upon them, and inchant their Minds? The Love of Gain, of Pleaſure, of Applauſe and Honour, divert them from all ſerious Thoughts of Heaven, and of the Things that relate to it. Our Countryman *Gilbert* hath turned all the *Earth* into one great *Load-ſtone:* Every Thing, ſaith he, is affected by *magnetick Attraction:* There is a *Powerful Drawing* on all Sides. This is certainly true of the *Earth* and *World* in a *moral* Meaning; its *attractive Vertue* is diſcerned every where. There are *Temptations and Allurements* where-ever we look, or which Way ſoſoever we turn. The World is full of Blandiſhments and Careſſes; the Charms of Senſuality are very operative: So that it is very difficult to reſiſt them.

The next *Enemy*, which every religious Pilgrim combats with is *himſelf*, his *own Fleſh*. And this is an Adverſary that is the more dangerous becauſe the leſs ſuſpected. This ſecret Treachery in our Breaſts is that which proves moſt fatal and deſtructive to us. Were it not for this falſe and perfidious Inmate in our Boſoms, neither the *World*'s Allurements nor *Satan*'s Temptations could hurt us. But the *Devil* diſcharges his fiery Darts againſt us, and *we* ſtand ready to receive them. The *World* ſets before us vain Objects, and our inward Appetite (which is become inordinate by Reaſon of the firſt and early Corruption of Mankind) puſhes us on to the enjoying of them, and ſo our own impatient Deſires contribute to our Ruin. This is that Depravity, which is born with us, and is congenite to our Natures, that original Infirmity of our Minds, that vile Propenſion and Proclivity to Evil, whereby we even tempt ourſelves, and take the Devil's Work out of his Hands. Thus Man makes every Thing a Snare to himſelf, and contrives his own Miſchief. And ſhall we not now pronounce him to be in great Streights? But he muſt go thro' greater before he can enter into Life and Happineſs. His corrupted *Nature* is to be amended, his depraved Temper muſt be rectified, his carnal Reaſonings and Arguings muſt be anſwered and refuted; his ſtrong Holds muſt be pulled down and demoliſhed; his Heart muſt be changed and purified; in brief, he muſt not only enter the Liſts againſt the Devil and the World, but he muſt wage War with *himſelf*, and conquer at *Home* that he may be victorious *Abroad*.

And thus you ſee what *thoſe Things* are which make our Salvation difficult. There is ſomething *internal*, *viz.* from ourſelves, our own inbred Deſires and corrupt Inclinations, which it will coſt us a great Deal of Pains to ſubdue. And there are other Things that are *external*, *viz.* our Enemies abroad, a ſubtle Devil, and a falſe World. It is a *hard Taſk* firſt rightly to encounter, and then ſucceſsfully to baffle and vanquiſh *theſe Foes*. And thus you may inform yourſelves *on what Accounts* the Way to Heaven is *Narrow*, and the Gate *Strait*. And ſo much ſhall ſuffice for the firſt Propoſition, *viz.* that it is a more difficult Thing to be ſaved, than Men commonly imagine.

My *Second Propoſition* (which is indeed the *Conſequent* of this which I have been inſiſting upon) is this, that Of all the Men in the World there are *but few* that attain to Heaven and Happineſs. The Number of them that ſhall be ſaved is *very little* in Reſpect of thoſe that ſhall be damned. Our Saviour not only tells us, that *Strait is the gate, and narrow the way which leadeth unto life*, but he adds this alſo, *few there be that find it*. So that the Text preſents us not only with the Difficulty of the Way to Bliſs, and the Eaſineſs of purchaſing our own Miſery, but likewiſe the Paucity of the Travellers to the *New Jeruſalem*, and the Multitude of thoſe that go an other Way.

But ſome will ſtop me at my very Entrance on this Part of my Text, and ask me what I intend to do? Have I a Deſign to work Deſpair in Mens Minds? Do I purpoſe to ſhut the Door of Heaven againſt any Man that is deſirous to go in? Am I ſuch a bold Arithmetician that I will compute and caſt up the Sum Total of all that ſhall go to Hell?

That I may not be miſtaken then, I will tell you plainly that tho' the Number of thoſe that are ſaved be *comparatively* ſmall, yet *abſolutely* ſpeaking it is very great. What elſe means that which we read in *Iſai.* lx. 4, *&c. The Gentiles ſhall come to thy light, and kings to the brightneſs of thy riſing. Lift up thine eyes round about and ſee: all they that gather themſelves together; they come to thee; thy ſons ſhall come from far, and thy daughters ſhall be nurſed at thy ſide. Then thou ſhalt ſee and flow together, and thy heart ſhall be enlarged, becauſe the abundance of the ſea ſhall be converted unto thee,* the *forces of the Gentiles ſhall come unto thee.* And ſo to the ſame Purpoſe to the 10*th* Verſe. All which foretells the *great Numbers* of all Sorts and Ranks of Perſons that ſhall be converted to Chriſtianity. And we are not to imagine, that this Prophecy ſpeaks only of an outward and ſeeming Converſion which conſiſts only in verbal Profeſſion, but it is rational to think, that a *great Part* of thoſe that are brought over to an external Acknowledgement of Chriſtianity, are likewiſe inwardly changed, and are made fit to be Inhabitants of the *New Jeruſalem.* And the vii*th* Chapter of the *Revelations* will give you an Account of the *vaſt Numbers* of the Servants of God who followed the Lamb, and were ſealed and ſaved. The Number of them that were of the Tribes of *Iſrael* was very great: But of all *other* Nations and People there was an innumerable Multitude: So you read in the 9*th* Verſe. *Lo! a great multitude which no man could number, that ſtood before the throne, clad in white robes, and with palms in their hands.* Theſe were *real Saints* (and not ſo only in outward Profeſſion): For in Verſe 14. you read that *their robes were waſhed in the blood of the lamb, i. e.* their Sins are expiated by the meritorious Undertakings of Chriſt Jeſus; and in the laſt Verſe of that Chapter 'tis ſaid, that *The Lamb which is in the midſt of the throne, ſhall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes.* Which is a Deſcription of their everlaſting Glory and Happineſs in the higheſt Heavens.

The Gates of Heaven then are ſet open to all:* Not only *Jews* but *Gentiles* may be admitted into them. And If I ſhould attempt to give you the Number of the Bleſſed, it were an impoſſible Task, and no Arithmetick can reach it. *In my father's Houſe are many Manſions*, ſaith our Saviour, and every one of thoſe large and capacious. And he tells us, that his *blood is ſhed for many*, Mat. xxvi. 28. and he *bringeth many ſons unto glory*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Hebrews* ii. 10. And in Order to an other World you read how the Apoſtles and godly Preachers about Chriſt's Time, and after it, gained a great many Proſelytes, and *every day there were added to the church ſuch as ſhould be ſaved.* St. *Peter* (we know) turned Fiſher of Men, and we read * how that ſpiritual Employment of his went on, what a Shole of Converts were catched into his Net at one Throw, no leſs than Three Thouſand at one Sermon. And ever ſince, and to this Day there is a conſtant Acceſſion of Members to the true Church of Chriſt: For tho' many of us who are of *Peter*'s Employment, and are ſet to fiſh for the Souls of Men, may take up the Words of that Apoſtle at an other Time, *We have laboured, and toiled, and have taken nothing*, our Inſtructions, our Reproofs, our Exhortations are unſucceſsful, and our whole Diſcourſes prove ineffectual; yet, bleſſed be God, this is not ſo always, but there are certain Seaſons when the holy Spirit deſcends, as that Angel of old at the Pool of *Betheſda*, and moves upon the Minds and Hearts of Men, and marvellouſly changes them, and heals and cures their ſpiritual Maladies, and fits them for Heaven and Happineſs, and ſo *many Souls* are ſaved.

This then is the true Account of the Matter, that the Number of the Godly and Bleſſed is great in itſelf, but yet in Reſpect of the Damned it is but ſmall. *Abſolutely* ſpeaking, many are ſaved: But ſpeaking *comparatively*, very few. The *New Jeruſalem* hath *more Gates than one*, (as 'tis deſcribed in *Rev.* xxii.) *i. e.* as I conceive, *many* enter into it: But notwithſtannding *this*, it is likewiſe an undeniable Truth, that *vaſt Numbers* are ſhut out of the *New Jeruſalem*; yea, many more are excluded than are let in. The *greateſt Number* of Men are wicked, and follow their evil Courſes, and periſh everlaſtingly.

Indeed this is that which hath partly been acknowledged by the *Heathen* World; they have been ſenſible that Goodneſs is a very rare Thing, and thoſe that practiſe it are hard to be found. This was the Meaning of the *Cynick*'s going with a Candle and Lanthorn at Noon-day to find an honeſt Man. *Anacharſis* was the only wiſe and honeſt Man among the *Scythians*; he was the Phœnix of that Part of the World. It was the Complaint of the beſt Pagans, and it grew at laſt to be a fix'd Saying of one of the wiſe Men, * *The Bad are more in Number than the Good.* † " There are but few, that are beloved of God, and whoſe " Vertue and Goodneſs prefer them to Heaven." ‡ " Good " Men, ſaith an other, are but thinly ſcatter'd in the World, " they are not ſo many but you may eaſily count them." And we find in *Tully*, and other grave Writers, that good and wiſe Men are emphatically called *the few*.

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* *Et de Hieroſolymis & de Britanniâ æqualiter Aula Cœleſtis patet.* Hieronym. ad Paulin.

* *Acts* ii. 41.

And the ancient *Jews*, as well as *Pagans*, have left us their Senſe of this Truth. || " The Number of the Good, ſaith " *Philo*, is few, for Vertue is not diffuſed very wide among " Mortals." If Morality be hard to find, where then is Grace to be found? Accordingly the wiſe Son of *Sirach* tells us, That *the number of fools is infinite*, Eccl. i. 15. *Fools*, i. e. graceleſs Perſons are numberleſs. And thoſe are remarkable Words, which you read in the 2d Book of *Eſdras*, Chap. viii. Ver. 1, *&c. The moſt High hath made this world for Many, but the world to come for Few. I will tell thee a ſimilitude, as when thou askeſt the earth, it ſhall ſay unto thee, that it giveth much mould, whereof earthen veſſels are made, but little duſt that gold cometh of: even ſo is the courſe of this preſent world. There be many created, but few ſhall be ſaved.* The Number of the Wicked, is comparatively like the *courſer Mould* of the Earth, in reſpect of that *finer Part* of it, which yields Gold and Silver. And in the ſame Apocryphal Writer, this Truth is repeated with great Vehemency, Chap. ix. of the aforeſaid Book, Ver. 15. *I have ſaid before, and now do ſpeak, and will ſpeak it alſo hereafter, that there be many more of them that periſh, than of them which ſhall be ſaved: like as a wave is greater than a drop.* Thus he.

So evident and clear is this Propoſition, which I am treating of, *viz.* That few are converted and ſaved *in Compariſon* of thoſe that are left under the Power of their Luſts, and are eternally loſt. It is not an *abſolute*, but a *comparative* Paucity which I am ſpeaking of. Let us then *compare* Men that at any Time were in the World, and we ſhall find what I have ſaid to be true. When there were but Four Perſons in the World, (a ſmall Number you will ſay, and one would think none of theſe ſhould be bad) yet of this very Number was *Cain*, who was a Murderer. Afterwards, when the World grew up, and was encreas'd, the ſacred Hiſtorian aſſures us, That *all fleſh had corrupted their ways*, only *Noah* was found a perfect Man in his Generation. And thoſe that lived under his Roof, fared the better for his Sake, for beſides him there were Seven others taken into the Ark. Of ſo many Millions of Men that were then in the World, there were but Eight that eſcaped the Deluge; nay of that Number curſed *Cham* was one. And as one ſingle Family was called out of the old World, ſo the ſame ſacred Records acquaint us, that only *Abraham* and a Part of his Family were found in all *Chaldæa* to be true Worſhippers of God, and therefore were commanded to leave thoſe Idolaters, and to ſeek an other Country. Upon an Inquiſition made, you may remember how few the Good were that could be found in *Sodom*; and at the Deſtruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* there were but Three ſaved, *Lot* and his Two Daughters. In *Iſai.* i. 9. and in other Places, the godly People among the *Jews* are call'd *a ſmall Remnant*. And the general Corruption, and the ſmall Number of the Church, is complain'd of by the Prophet *Micah*, Chap. vii. Ver. 1, 2. *Woe is me, for I am as when they have gathered the ſummer-fruits, as the grape-gleanings of the vintage: there is no cluſter to eat: the good man is periſhed out of the earth, and there is none upright amongſt men, &c.* As the *Gleanings* are in Compariſon of the *whole Crop* or *Harveſt*, ſo are the good and righteous Perſons in reſpect of thoſe that are evil and wicked, *i. e.* they are very ſmall and inconſiderable. And this had been *David*'s Complaint before, in *Pſal.* xii. 1. *Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaſeth, for the faithful fail from*

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* οἱ πλείους κακόι. *Bias.*

† ——— *Pauci, quos æquus amavit Jupiter, ac ardens evexit ad æthera Virtus.* Virg. Æn. 6.

‡ *Rari quippe boni; numero ſunt vix totidem quot Thebarum Portæ, vel divitis oſtia Nili.* Juv.

|| Ὀλίγος δὲ τούτων ἀριθμός ἐστιν· ἀρετὴ γὰρ οὐ πολύχουν ἐν θνητῷ γένει. *De Fortitudine.*

among the children of men. Godly and faithful Men are *very ſcarce*; you cannot ſee any *conſiderable Number* of them. This, it is probable, is ſignified by that figurative Way of ſpeaking in *Cant.* iv. 12. where the *Church* is ſaid to be *a garden encloſed, a ſpring ſhut up, a fountain ſealed.* It is no *common* and *uſual* Thing; there are *few* that have an Intereſt in it; it lies not open to the Multitude of Men in the World; or rather they do voluntarily exclude themſelves from it. How rare have the Righteous been in all Ages? One *Enoch* that walked with God; one *Job* in the Land of *Uz*; a *David*, a *Joſiah*, a *Jehoſhaphat*, an *Hezekiah*, and but one or two more among all the Kings of *Iſrael* and *Judah*.

And this Paucity of good Men was in our *Saviour's Time*, and in the ſucceeding Ages. Thoſe that are choſen out of the World, are ſtiled by Chriſt, *a little flock*, Luk. xii. 32. It is very emphatical in the Original, where there is a *double Diminutive*, to ſet forth the *exceeding Smallneſs* of this Flock. It may be tranſlated a *little little-flock*, for ϖοίμνιον is a Diminutive from ϖοίμνη, *grex.* We have it from the ſame infallible Mouth, that [*Many are called, but few are choſen.*] Mat. xx. 16. The *Many* are the ſame with the *wicked World*, who are called upon by the Preaching of the Word, and enjoy the outward Means of Salvation: But the Number of thoſe is *few* who have the inward Call, and are choſen from among the reſt of the World to be Inheritors of Life and Happineſs. Among the *Aſian* Biſhops, there was not one but was to be reproved, and under their Charge the greateſt Part were found moſt groſs and notorious Offenders. Shall I paſs to the Ages afterwards? Do we not ſee there the whole World lying in Wickedneſs, the *Generality* of Mankind corrupted and perverted? The good Chriſtians were not able to keep the reſt from being corrupted with Errors, and debauched with Vice. *Athanaſius againſt the whole World*, and *the whole World againſt Athanaſius*, was the Complaint of the Times preſently after the Ten Perſecutions. Princes, and Clergy, and People, were ſtrangely over-run with Arianiſm, and with This were joyned unchriſtian Feuds and Animoſities, Wrath and Envy, Hatred and Malice, Perſecution and Bloodſhed, and a general Depravation of Mens Lives and Manners.

But let us approach to our own Times, and *compare* all Men in the World as they are at this Day, and then you will find, that there is Reaſon to aſſert that the Number of the Saved is but few. Take then the World aſunder, divide it into Four Parts, I mean Four Sorts of Religion, that are in the World, *viz.* Paganiſm, Judaiſm, Turciſm, and Chriſtianity. Of *all* theſe, there is but *one* True, and that is the Laſt. But (alas!) *how poor* a Share hath this in the World? *Brerewood*, in his *Enquiries*, tells us, that *Chriſtians* poſſeſs about a Sixth Part of the known inhabited Earth: The *Mahometans* have a Fifth; and all the other Parts of the known World (except a few Jews) are *Pagans.* If you divide the World then into Six Parts, Five of them are devoid of *Chriſtianity*; and for One Chriſtian, there are Ten Thouſand Pagans, Mahometans, and Jews. So that if you reckon up the *Gentiles*, *Jews* and *Turks* that deny Chriſtianity, and, beſides that, reckon the many *Atheiſts* that acknowledge no God, nor Religion; and even among *Chriſtians* if you number the *Profane* and *Diſſolute*, (for *theſe* call themſelves *Chriſtians*) and the *Superſtitious* and *Idolatrous*, (for there are *ſuch* alſo who pretend to *Chriſtianity*) and the *Hypocritical*, falſe, and feigned Chriſtians, (and many of *that* Sort there are in the viſible Church,) if you reckon after this Manner, (as you muſt do, if you reckon right) you will find that the Number of true and real Chriſtians is but *few*.

Compare even thoſe of the *Chriſtian Church* together, *i. e.* Set the *True living Members* of it againſt *the Dead and counterfeit ones*, and you will conclude, that few are ſaved. In the Parable of the Sower there were *Four Sorts* of Ground, but there was but *One good* for *Three bad Ones*, Mar. iv. 3, *&c.* There were *Four Sorts* of Hearers, (as Chriſt interprets that Parable) and but *one* of them good, *Ver.* 15, of that *Chap.* and ſo on. There were *Ten Lepers* cleanſed and cured; and but *One* of them return'd with Thanks. True Thankſulneſs to God, true Religion and a holy Life are hard to be found: But the contrary is to be met with every where. Stones and Pebbles are common, but Pearls and Diamonds are rare. Weeds and Briers grow apace, and fill every Field and Hedge, but uſeful Flowers and Plants are more ſcarce. Godlineſs is rare, and hath few Followers: But the Wicked are very numerous. Sinners go by *whole Troops* to Hell. You may behold *Multitudes* of Men and Women poſting with all Haſte in the *Broad Way*. *That Road* is beaten and frequented. The Number is *very great* of ſcandalous and ungodly Men: But there are *very few* that live according to the Rules of the Goſpel, and attain to Celeſtial Bliſs and Glory. [*Strait* is the Gate, and *narrow* is the Way that leadeth unto Life, and *few* there be that find it.] Thus I have endeavour'd to poſſeſs you with a Senſe of the Truth of this Propoſition; becauſe I intend it ſhall ſerve you for ſome greater Purpoſes afterwards.

I muſt now ſet before you the *Reaſons* and *Grounds* of the Propoſition, *viz.* Why the Number of thoſe that are ſaved, is ſo little; and at the ſame Time I will give you a *further Account* of the firſt Propoſition, *viz.* That it is very difficult to be ſaved: For the Reaſons of *both* are alike, and therefore I will join them now both together.

Firſt, To begin with that which was the ſad Beginning of all our Miſeries, it muſt needs be, that the Number of thoſe who are ſaved, is but little, in Compariſon of thoſe that are damned; and alſo that it is a very difficult Thing to attain to Salvation and Happineſs, it muſt needs be ſo, (I ſay) becauſe of the great Shipwreck at *Adam*'s Fall. Many were caſt away in that Bottom. For that Firſt Man carried our Concerns and Effects in his Veſſel, and when this ſplit on the Rock, *we* were all ſhattered and plunged into Miſery. Truly it is a Wonder that *any* eſcaped and got to Shore ſafe. When the *Angels* rebell'd, they were all caſt away, and were never recovered. The *whole Number* of thoſe apoſtate Spirits remain in Chains of Darkneſs, and receive no Advantage by the Coming of Chriſt. He is a *Saviour* to *us*, and not to *them*. But *one Reaſon* why *ſo few* reap the *Benefit* of Chriſt's Coming, and are loſt and undone for ever, is, becauſe there is a general Corruption of Men's Natures; and *that* makes them unwilling to receive the Impreſſions of Goodneſs, and to mind their everlaſting Happineſs. Hence it is, that Vice ſpreads itſelf more than Vertue, and that the Diffuſiveneſs of the one is ſtronger than the other. Not that Goodneſs is leſs powerful and charming in it ſelf, but Men by Reaſon of their corrupted Nature are more propenſe to Vice than Vertue, and proſecute the one more vigorouſly than the other. This ſufficiently appears from that great Backwardneſs of Men to undertake the Work of Religion and Holineſs. They are very averſe to it; their vicious and corrupt Natures recoil at the very Thoughts of renouncing their evil Ways. Degenerate Fleſh boggles at the ſtrict and ſevere Laws of Chriſt. If Men are prevail'd with to *enter* upon Religion, and to make an *Eſſay* of Repentance, yet how eaſily are they called off, and hindred from any *Progreſs* in it!

And I might add under this Head, that the Senſe of bodily Pleaſure is before the full Exerciſe of our Underſtanding, and ſo we *begin* ill, which is a great Damage to us. We live the Life of Senſe before we attain to Reaſon and Judgment: Thence it is hard to reſiſt corporal Delights, and to correct Senſe, and to live above it, and to follow the Dictates of the Spirit, and to be ruled by the Will and Word of God. *This* I render as the *firſt Reaſon* why eternal Salvation is *no eaſy* Purchaſe, and why *ſo few* Perſons are ſaved. Original Sin hath weakened Mankind; and the ſenſual and carnal Part overmaſters that which is ſpiritual; and hence poor Man is eaſily miſled, and even by the Byaſs of his *natural* Temper and Inclination is carried forth to the Commiſſion of all Sin.

Secondly, There is in moſt Men a *wilful Ignorance* of the Way to Salvation, and of their own Good and Welfare; and *this* may be aſſign'd as a *main Cauſe* why ſo few are ſaved. How *many* ignorant Souls are there, who content themſelves with their dark Road that they are in? They ſee *others* ſtriving to enter in at the ſtrait Gate, and they obſerve that they put themſelves to a great deal of Trouble and Pains: Wherefore they, for their Part, continue in the *blind and obſcure Path* which they have taken, and there they live at Eaſe, and indulge their Follies, and are not ſollicitous to correct them. They wilfully ſhut out the Light, that it may not diſcover to them their Miſcarriages, that they may not be ſelf-condemn'd, but continue in their Sins without Check and Controll. They live and die in groſs Ignorance, and ſo periſh eternally. And how *great* are the *Numbers* of thoſe, that thus periſh? A conſiderable Part of the *Chriſtian* World is ruined by this Means. They are *bred up* in Darkneſs, and even when they come to *Maturity of Years*, they affect Darkneſs, and hate the Light. And then it is impoſſible that they ſhould have any Reliſh of Religion, and that they ſhould embrace the true Way, and walk in it, and approve of it. Mark the Words of our Saviour to the *Samaritan* Woman, *John* iv. 7. *If thou kneweſt the gift of God, and who it is that ſaith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldeſt have asked of him.* Were Chriſt *known*, and his Worth diſplay'd, were the Neceſſity and Excellency of Grace and Heaven throughly diſcover'd to Men's Minds, were their groſs Ignorance diſpell'd, and the Beams of divine and heavenly Light darted into their Souls, they would ſoon behold, and beholding admire, and admiring embrace the gracious Tenders of Salvation. It was *Plato*'s Perſuaſion (and it was a very charitable Conjecture concerning Mankind) That if Vertue were viſible, all Men would fall in Love with it. If you could ſuppoſe moral Excellencies and Perfections to be expoſed to our bodily Eyes, we could not but be raviſh'd with their Beauty. Much more if the intrinſick Worth of Chriſtianity and Evangelical Holineſs was ſufficiently diſcern'd, it would command Reverence and Love.

On the contrary, that Blindneſs and Ignorance wherewith Men's Minds are clouded, render Chriſtianity ſo unacceptable to them. They have not view'd its admirable Features and Proportions; otherwiſe ſurely they would be enamour'd with it. Were their Eyes opened, to ſee the wonderful Things of the Evangelical Law, to gaze on the Beauties of Holineſs, to take an entire Proſpect of the Salvation purchaſed by the great Lover of Souls Chriſt Jeſus, they would fall down and adore the Divine Mercy, heartily accept of the Pardon of their Sins, and cheerfully abandon their moſt beloved Vices, to purchaſe the Love and Favour of ſo compaſſionate a Saviour. Then you ſhould hear them cry out with that *Engliſh* Martyr at the Stake, *None but Chriſt, None but Chriſt.* To pleaſe him is better, far better than the Gratifying of our Luſts, and the Indulging of our ſinful Pleaſures. To ſerve him is perfect Freedom; and to obey his holy and juſt Laws is far more honourable and ſatisfactory than to arrive to the higheſt Honour and Grandure of this World. To enjoy him, is to be preferred before the Confluence of the greateſt Wealth that this Earth can afford. This is the Effect of *knowing* the Things of God, and being *acquainted* with the Excellencies of Holineſs. But alas! Thoſe dark Souls who are ignorant of theſe Things, or who have not a full View of them, are ſo far from admiring and prizing them, and being raviſh'd with them, that they deſpiſe them, and think them not worthy their Thoughts or Endeavours. This is the Reaſon, why the Pearl of great Price is *trod upon.* And who would *expect*, but that it ſhould be trampled upon by *Swine*, by ignorant and ſottiſh Perſons, by brutiſh and ſenſual Men? *Ignorance* can never conduct us to Religion and Holineſs, much leſs to Happineſs; we cannot find the *ſtrait Gate* in the *dark.* Never think to go *blindfold* to Heaven. You take the Courſe indeed to *fall into a Ditch*, to expoſe yourſelves to Danger and Damnation: But *this* is not the Way to be of the Number of thoſe that are ſaved.

Thirdly, Unbelief, as well as Ignorance, damns a great Part of the World, and cauſes the Number of the Bleſſed to be *ſo ſcarce.* I do not mean here the groſs *Infidelity* of *Pagans*, who never heard of Chriſt, and therefore it cannot be expected that they ſhould *believe* in him. But I ſpeak now of *that Unbelief* which thoſe, who live within the Sound of the Goſpel, are guilty of. This is a Fault of the Will, as well as of the Underſtanding, and of the Former chiefly. There are very many that will not be induced to give Aſſent unto the Truths of the Goſpel; they will not credit the Threatnings and Promiſes which are recorded in the Word of God. The Complaint of the Evangelical

Prophet is found verified, *Who hath believed our Report?* Where is the Man that ſincerely and heartily acknowledges the Principles of Chriſtianity, and aſſerts and maintains them as infallible Truths, and indiſpenſable Verities? How few are there that affectionately own and embrace the Holy Scriptures, and reckon them the only Rule of Faith, and the great Standard of Men's Lives and Manners? How inconſiderable is the Number of thoſe faithful Souls, who depend and rely upon Jeſus Chriſt for Life and Salvation, and renouncing all their Sins, reſt ſolely on his Righteouſneſs? But (on the contrary) do not the Generality of the World refuſe the only Remedy? Do they not trample under their Feet the Blood of the *Meſſias?* How *hardly* are any Men perſuaded to look up unto Jeſus with an Eye of *Faith?* This is the Root of all their other Miſcarriages. This is it, which hath damned ſo many; This is it, which cauſes them to neglect and deſpiſe the Way of Life and Salvation, and to diſregard the Offers of Mercy and Pardon, which are made unto them by Chriſt Jeſus the Redeemer. To them that *believe he is precious*, he is amiable, and acceptable, and the Chiefeſt of Ten Thouſands: But *Unbelief* repreſents him in an *other* Shape to the Eyes of Men, and there is no Comelineſs in him that he ſhould be deſired of them. Thus it proceeds from *Unbelief* that ſo many periſh, and ſo few eſcape eternal Wrath.

Fourthly, This may be aſſign'd as an other Reaſon, why the Number of thoſe that are ſaved is but ſmall, in Compariſon of the great Multitudes that are damned, namely, becauſe Men nouriſh *Inſenſibleneſs* and *Security*, and will not be affected with the Wretchedneſs of their Condition. There are few that have a Senſe of the Burden of their Sins; and how then can it be expected, that they ſhould have a Deſire to be eaſed of it? Where Sin lies light, the Salvation by Chriſt Jeſus is ever vilified and diſreſpected. We know not how to ſet a right Eſtimate on the Phyſician, and duly to prize his Preſcriptions, till we languiſh under ſome Pain or Sickneſs. As thoſe that *labour and are heavy laden* under the inſupportable Preſſure and Load of their Sins, are invited by our Lord to *come to him*; ſo indeed they are the only Perſons that are capable of coming, and conſequently, as he promiſeth, of receiving *Reſt* to their Souls. It is the contrite Soul that values the Offers of Salvation made in the Goſpel, that humbly requeſteth to partake of the Benefit of them, and is reſtleſs and diſſatisfied till it hath the happy Experience of doing ſo. But the Want of this Conviction and Humiliation, is one Cauſe of Men's neglecting the great Concern of their Souls, even the Entring into the ſtrait Gate, the Securing of their Welfare in an other World. It is obſerved by Phyſicians, that thoſe Diſeaſes are worſt, which are accompanied with a Stupidity and Deprivation of Senſe. So it is in the Souls of Men, and in their ſpiritual Concerns: Want of Feeling is a dangerous Symptom, yea a certain Indication of Death and Deſtruction approaching. Alas! Men reflect not on their miſerable Condition; they mind not how curſed and deſperate their Eſtate is: They conſider not that they are the Enemies of God, and muſt ſhortly feel the deadly Effects of his Hatred and Diſpleaſure. They are overrun with all vicious Habits, but are not ſenſible of it; they lie under the Guilt of their Sins, but apprehend no Danger in it. It is no Wonder then, that they are not moved and affected with the Salvation tender'd in the Goſpel, and that the Way to Life and Happineſs is ſuch an inſignificant Thing with them, and that ſo few Men are either good here, or happy hereafter, and (as the Conſequence of this) that the Number of the Damned is ſo great and ample.

Fifthly, *Pride* and *Self-Conceit* are an other Cauſe why ſo great Multitudes of Men fall ſhort of Salvation and Happineſs, and why the Number of thoſe that are ſaved, is ſo rare. It is no Wonder that the Goſpel-Salvation is every where ſlighted, ſince it ſo directly croſſes the Grain of our Nature, I mean, our high Opinion of ourſelves. The Evangelical Temper is humble and ſubmiſſive; it dictates to us mean Thoughts of our ſelves, and of all our Performances; it bids us frankly acknowledge that we have nothing but what we have received, that we are all poor Alms-people, and live upon the Charity and Contribution of Heaven, that all we can do is the Reſult of Free-Grace in Chriſt Jeſus, that our beſt Works are ſtain'd and corrupted, that our holieſt Duties have ſome Allays of Impurity and Defilement. The Man that adopts himſelf into *Chriſtianity*, muſt utterly renounce all Self-Confidence, and fond Perſuaſions of his own Worth and Abilities. He muſt ever derive his Strength from Chriſt by humble and importunate Prayer. He muſt *beg*; and *Pride* will not ſuffer him to do that: He muſt wait and expect: He muſt own himſelf to be a dependent Creature, and one that is at another's Allowance wholly.

The Want of this, undoubtedly, was the Occaſion of that Diſreſpect which the Goſpel found from the *Jews*, who were a ſelf-conceited People, and had a great Opinion of their Ability to keep their Law. The proud Phariſees would not truckle to the mean Diſpenſation of Evangelical Faith, which taught them to truſt in an other's Merits, and to renounce their own Worth and Righteouſneſs. Thus came the Doctrine of the Croſs to be *a Stumbling-block to the Jews*. And for the ſame Reaſon it was *to the Greeks* (the Heathen Philoſophers) *Fooliſhneſs*, for theſe haughty Men reckon'd it a ridiculous Thing to hope for Life and Bleſſedneſs by the Death of any one. Theſe lofty Sons of Reaſon counted it abſurd to depend upon, and to be beholding to the Undertakings of an other for their Felicity: For This, they bragg'd, lay in their own Power. * "It is a baſe Thing, ſaith one of them, to ſue to the Gods, and to weary them with your Petitions. To what Purpoſe are all your Prayers and Wiſhes? Make yourſelves happy: It is in your own Power to do it." Being thus conceited of themſelves they were of a Flight too high for the Goſpel.

I wiſh ſome Perſons did not too cloſely follow Theſe Men, whilſt they ſoar ſo loftily in their Doctrines of *Merit* and *Supererogation*. And I wiſh ſome others did not imitate them in their denying *Original Depravity*, and *Special Grace*, and in exceſſive extolling the *Freedom of Man's Will*. In theſe they ſeem to have more of the *Stoicks* high Strains and Bravadoes, and to have more of the *Heathen Arrogance*, than of the *Chriſtian Simplicity*. It is this lofty and proud Spirit, which hinders *great Numbers* from entring into the Kingdom of God. But it is *Humility*, which opens the Gate to it, and makes us capable of entring in.

Which is well repreſented to us by our Saviour in the Examples of a *Publican* and a *Phariſee*, Luk. xviii. 10, *&c.* The proud Phariſee valued himſelf upon his own Righteouſneſs, and bragg'd of what he had done, and thought that his Performance would entitle him to Heaven. But the humble, dejected Publican was ready to ſink under the Burden of his Imperfections and Failings, and he ſmote upon his Breaſt, and cry'd out for Mercy and Pardon. *This man* (ſaith our Saviour) *went down to his houſe juſtified* rather *than the other*. The Word *rather*, is not in the Original, but it is an imperfect Way of Speaking: However, it denotes that the one was accepted of God, and the other was not; as it follows in the next Words, *Every one that exalts himſelf ſhall be abaſed* (that was the *proud Phariſee*'s Doom) *and he that humbleth himſelf, ſhall be exalted.* This was the *poor Publican*'s Caſe. His *Humility* fitted him for Mercy and Forgiveneſs, for Salvation and Happineſs.

Swell not then beyond your juſt Proportions; do not vaunt and boaſt; be ſenſible of your Defects and Failings. Conſider what weak and ſhallow Creatures you are. Acknowledge your Dependance on God; confeſs that you receive all from him, and reſolve to ſubmit all to him. Know this, that the Haughty and Self-conceited are deſpiſed, yea hated by God; but the humble Soul he takes Care of. Mind the Apoſtle's Advice in 1 *Cor.* iii. 18. *If any man among you ſeemeth to be wiſe in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wiſe.* Lay aſide the Conceit of your own Wiſdom, be of a humble and lowly Spirit: For this is the true Evangelical Spirit. The Goſpel teaches Simplicity and Humility; it every where oppoſes Pride and Arrogance. The Goſpel-Inſtitution is meek and mild, it makes us deport ourſelves as *Children* and *Underlings*. Remember that the Gate of the heavenly Kingdom is *ſtrait* and *narrow*, and gives no Entrance to the *Lofty* and *Proud*. The Gate is *low*, and therefore you muſt *ſtoop* and *bow*, or elſe you will never gain a Paſſage through it. None but ſuch as are humble and little in their own Eyes, can enter in. The proud and arrogant Man, who ſpeaks and looks big, and is ſwell'd with Self-conceit, he is of too large a Size to get in at this *ſtrait Gate*, this *narrow* Way. *This* I reckon as one principal Reaſon why Men fail of Heaven and Happineſs.

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* *Turpe eſt etiamnum Deos fatigare: Quid votis opus eſt? Fac teipſum Felicem.* Sen.

Sixthly, The Way to Life muſt needs be difficult, and few there be that find it, becauſe Men wilfully *deceive themſelves*. This is an undeniable Truth, (tho' the Generality of the World will not acknowledge it) that there is a Cheat in every Sin, and that Men are groſly deluded and impoſed upon by the Commiſſion of it. Hence in Scripture you read of the *Deceitfulneſs of Riches*, Mat. xiii. 22. and *deceitful Luſts*, Eph. iv. 22. and the *Deceivableneſs of Unrighteouſneſs*, 2 Theſ. ii. 10. and the *Deceitfulneſs of Sin*, Heb. iii. 13. All which acquaints us, that when a Man breaks God's Laws, and acts contrary to his Duty, he deceives and cozens himſelf. The Spirit of Folly and Vanity reigns in him; his Judgment of Things is nothing but fond Miſtake and Dotage. Falſe Propoſitions are entertained by him, and his whole Life is a Deluſion. How common is it for Men to imagine that they are in the right Way to Bleſſedneſs, and that they are ſafe and ſecure, when there is no Ground for any ſuch Thoughts? Theſe are perfectly of the *Laodicean* Humour, they brag that they are *rich and increaſed with goods, and have need of nothing: and know not*, (i.e. will not know and conſider) *that they are wretched and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked*, Rev. iii. 17. They flatter themſelves in their Sins, and are not apprehenſive how fatal they are; they ſay of them as Chriſt of *Lazarus*'s Diſeaſe, *This ſickneſs is not unto death*, they will not prove mortal and deſtructive to us. But this is mere *Self-deceit*; and it is the worſe, becauſe they take Delight in it, and love to abuſe themſelves. Of ſuch Perſons the wiſe Man ſpeaks in *Prov.* xiii. 7. *There is that maketh himſelf rich, yet hath nothing.* And again, *Prov.* xii. 15. *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes:* And again, Chap. xvi. Ver. 2. *All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes:* And *This*, (as being ſome very important Matter) is repeated alſo in Chap. xxi. Ver. 2. *Every way of a man is right in his own eyes.*

Thus we deal treacherouſly and perfidiouſly with ourſelves, and there cannot be a more ready Way to Deſtruction.

But I will inſtance in ſome *particular Cheats and Deluſions* whereby Men impoſe upon themſelves, and thereby procure their Ruin. Firſt, it is no uncommon Thing for Perſons to delude themſelves by thinking that ſome *Gifts* and *Endowments* will ſuffice in ſtead of true Grace and Holineſs. As the *Gnoſticks* (of whom *Simon* the Sorcerer was the Ring-leader) pretended to extraordinary *Knowledge*, and maintain'd that This was ſufficient to Mens Salvation, altho' their Lives and Manners were never ſo vicious. There are many that ſeem to be *Diſciples* of this lewd Sect; they content themſelves with a ſpeculative and notional Religion, they value themſelves upon their Parts and Acquirements, their Learning and Ability to talk and diſpute about Religion, and are not concern'd for the practical Part of it. So in our Saviour's Time, (as we learn from the Evangelical Writings) there were thoſe that gloried in their extraordinary Gifts, and were ſo fooliſh as to perſuade themſelves, that theſe were ſufficient to make them acceptable to God. Their Boaſt was, that they *had propheſied in Chriſt's name, and in his name had done many wonderful works*, but we know what will be their Doom, *I know you not, depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* Mat. vii. 22, 23. And if this was the Sentence pronounced againſt thoſe who were endued with miraculous Gifts, then we ought to infer, that the greateſt of natural and ordinary Accompliſhments will not entitle us to the Favour of God.

Secondly, Men value themſelves on their external *Privileges*, as they are Members of the Chriſtian Church, and fondly think that theſe will be extremely advantagious to them, notwithſtanding their Neglect of true Holineſs: And thus they deceive themſelves and endanger their Souls. For this is certain, that *outward Immunities* are of little Worth without *inward Grace* and Sanctity. Which is the Senſe of the Apoſtle's Words in *Gal.* v. 6. *In*

Jeſus Chriſt neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but faith which worketh by love, or (as he expreſſeth it in an other Place) *the new creature, i. e.* an inward Change of our Hearts, and a Reformation of our whole Man. This, and this only will be available and advantagious to you. Be not deceived then, think it not enough to be of the true Church, to be in Communion with the moſt orthodox and pious Chriſtians, and to partake of all the Ordinances with them. Know this, that Thouſands have miſſed of Heaven by relying on ſpiritual Priviledges. Their Plea is, that they are Members of ſuch a viſible Church, and thereupon they think themſelves ſafe. They enjoy the Ordinances of Chriſt's Inſtitution, and thence conclude that their Condition is good, and that they are in the State of Grace. They were admitted into the Church of Chriſt by holy Baptiſm, and *that* is a ſufficient Mark of Regeneration and Saintſhip. But (alas!) Theſe Men ſhould conſider, that being baptized in the Name of *Chriſt*, will not avail them, if they do the Works of the *Devil*. It is not *Baptiſm* that will ſave them, if they neglect the *Anſwer of a good Conſcience. Simon* the Sorcerer, and *Julian* the Apoſtate were baptized, but had no Advantage by it. That ſacramental Water will be inſignificant, if we defile and pollute ourſelves with a ſinful Life. And ſo likewiſe we muſt not imagine, that the Taking of the *other Sacrament* (the Lord's Supper) will be of any Uſe to us, if we perſiſt in our evil Ways, and diſhonour God with our wicked Lives. There will be thoſe at the laſt Day, who will plead thus, We have *eaten and drunk* in thy Preſence, and at *thy Table*: But it will be in vain to alledge this high Priviledge: For Chriſt will ſay unto them, *I know you not.*

Thirdly, It is thought by ſome, that *Good Nature*, and *Civility*, and a fair outward Deportment will be ſufficient to entitle them to Happineſs; and thus they miſerably cheat and delude themſelves. If they behave themſelves diſcreetly and cautiouſly, and refrain from heinous and ſcandalous Sins, and ſuch as bring Reproach and Diſgrace even in this Life; if their Demeanor be civil and outwardly honeſt, and they ſhew themſelves kind and courteous to their Neighbours, then they conclude that they are good Chriſtians, they do all that is required of them, they cannot be found Fault with, their Lives are ſuch as will be rewarded with heavenly Bliſs. But herein Men greatly Miſtake. This is an *other Inſtance* of Self-Deceit. For an outwardly moral and civil Behaviour is not Chriſtianity. Good Breeding and genteel Education are not evangelical Vertues. It is not ſufficient to plead, that you are good-natured Men, and that you are taken Notice of for your courteous and neighbourly Carriage. This is far ſhort of what is required of you. There is a Duty to *God* as well as to *Man*. You muſt be *religious* as well as *honeſt*. You muſt ſerve your *Maker* and *Redeemer*, as well as diſcharge yourſelves aright towards your *Brethren*. If you take no Care of theſe, all your goodly Behaviour and Deportment ſignify nothing. I beſeech you conſider this, for the Generality of the World are ruined and deſtroyed for ever, becauſe they are careleſs as to this Matter.

Fourthly, Men *deceive themſelves* by harbouring *this* Perſwaſion in their Minds, that *faint Wiſhes* and *bare Purpoſes* will ſerve their Turn. They content themſelves with their good Intentions, and their honeſt Meanings. They think that their *languid Deſires* will be *ſufficient*, altho' they be never reduced to Action, or ripened into Practice. *This* is their Comfort (they ſay) that they *mean well*, whatever their *Lives* are. They wiſh and deſire they may be as good as the beſt, tho' moſt of their Actions are of the worſt Sort. *This* is a common *Deluſion*, that Men labour under; but it is a pernicious one, and hath proved the Ruin of many. For (alas!) meer Wiſhes are vain and trivial, and they are wholly uſeleſs when they are not in Order to a Life of Godlineſs and the Practice of Religion. Purpoſes and Intentions are the *Root* only of pious Actions: But 'tis a Sign the Root is *withered* and become utterly unſerviceable, where there appear no *Fruits* of Holineſs, no *actual Executing* of thoſe Wiſhes and Purpoſes. *Rely not* then upon your lazy Deſires and Well-wiſhings; think not that theſe will be available to Salvation. You muſt do ſome *greater Thing*, or elſe you will never attain to Bleſſedneſs.

Fifthly, An *other Self-Deceit* is This, Men reſt in *Formalities*, and thereby undo themſelves. They content themſelves with an Outſide of Religion; they are perſuaded that a *formal Profeſſion*, and a *perfunctory Diſcharge of their Duty* will ſuffice. There are many deluded Souls, who imagine that their Entring in at the *Church Door* is Entring in at the *Strait Gate*. If they come to the publick Aſſemblies, and there *hear* or *pray*, tho' it be in a *formal Manner*, and meerly for *Faſhion*'s Sake, they think they have done enough. Are there not a Sort of Men (who would be accounted very religious, and of the only true Church, and ſuch as think they ſhall be ſaved, when all others are damned,) who place their Religion in meer Ceremonies, outward Geſtures, and formal Services? The *Opus Operatum* (as they call it) ſerves their Turn. If they ſay over ſo many *Pater Noſters* and *Ave Maries, that* goes for *good Praying* altho' they do not *mind* one Word they ſay. *Latin* Prayers are good Devotion with them, altho' they do not underſtand a Syllable of them. Or, ſuppoſe they do underſtand them, yet the Doctors of their Church acquaint them, that 'tis not *neceſſary* they ſhould *attend to* them, and join with them in their *Hearts*, for God hears the Prayers of the Church tho' our Minds are not intent upon them. Theſe Perſons eſteem their Prayers for the *Number* and *Tale* of them, not for any *Knowledge or Affection* that accompany them.

And there are *formal Proteſtants* as well as *formal Papiſts*: For I deſire not to flatter any Sort of Perſons. There is amongſt us many a religious Complimenter of the Almighty (if I may ſo ſpeak:) They give him the Hat and the Knee; they utter a few ſubmiſſive Words, they draw near to him with their Lips, but their Hearts are far from him. They perform ſome external Duties of Religion; and this is all they are ſollicitous about. If they do outward Honour and Worſhip to God, they think they are excuſed from internal Piety. But I deſire you, my Brethren, to beware of *this Deceit*: Content not yourſelves with a *Form of Godlineſs*, without the *Power* and Energy of it. The Heart and inward Man muſt be looked to, and carefully ordered, no leſs than the Behaviours and Manners of the Body and outward Man. Nay, *your great Work is within*: You muſt ſee that your Minds and Affections are duly directed and regulated. Remember that a *formal and ſeeming Religion* will not bring you to a *real Heaven*: For you are plainly told, that without true Holineſs there is no Happineſs, and that without Doing the Will of God you cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Take heed then, that you flatter not yourſelves, and that you rely not on *Formalities*.

Sixthly, An other Inſtance of Self-Deceit and Self-Flattery is this, Men are *more intentive upon others* than upon *themſelves*. They are not unlike thoſe Witches which *Seneca* ſpeaks of, who whilſt they ſtaid *at Home*, laid aſide their Eyes, and were always blind, but when they gadded *Abroad*, they were ever obſerved to put on their Eyes. Thus ſome Men are averſe to ſpy what is done *within Doors*, to ſee what they act themſelves, but they buſy themſelves in taking Notice of the Behaviour of *others*. By this Means they become ignorant of their own Condition, they are not acquainted with themſelves, they are Strangers to what they do, and know not in what State they are. Hereby their Sins are undiſcerned, their Faults are undiſcovered, they imagine they are in the Way to Happineſs, when indeed they are in the direct Path that leads to Deſtruction. It is of little Uſe to pry into the everlaſting State of any other Perſons: Our Buſineſs is to look to our own Salvation. Whatever we do, let us ſecure this, and let us not be ſollicitous about the Fate of others. Let us not with the buſy and over-curious Diſciples ask, *What ſhall this Man do?* But let us chiefly be concerned to know what ſhall befall ourſelves. It was a *Jewiſh Proverb*, and contains very great Senſe in it, *If a Man himſelf doth not keep the Commandments, who ſhall keep them for him?* Which is as much as to ſay, A man muſt have a Care of his own Salvation. It cannot be done by a Proxy. Let every one ſay as *Jacob* did to *Laban*, *It is Time now that I ſhould provide for my own houſe*; I have for many Years ſerved the World, the Fleſh, and even Satan the worſt Maſter, I have ſpent my Time in gratifying of theſe: It is high Time now that I ſhould provide for my own Welfare, and ſerve my God, and conſult my beſt and chiefeſt Intereſt. When we once come to uſe this Language in Sincerity, we ſhall be careful to ſearch into our own Hearts and Lives, and not to dive into thoſe of others. We ſhall (as the holy Scripture directs us,) *commune with our own Hearts*, and look narrowly into ourſelves, and find Employment about our own Actions and Lives. And unleſs we do this, we ſhall make a falſe Repreſentation of Things to ourſelves, and thereby cheat and delude our own Souls.

And under this Head I will mention an other common Fault, which is our *comparing ourſelves with others*, and thereby deceiving ourſelves. For whilſt we enter a Compariſon between ourſelves and others, theſe Two Miſchiefs will commonly enſue, Firſt, we are apt to rely upon this, that we do as others. Some of the beſt in the Pariſh, the wiſeſt, the richeſt, the ableſt Men we converſe with, will ſometimes be guilty of Lying and Defrauding, of immoderate Love of the World, of Envy and Malice, of Intemperance and Exceſs, of Prophaning the Lord's Day, of Pride and Vanity, and other viſible Enormities. Therefore, ſay deluded Souls, *We* may act as theſe Men do. Why ſhould we be more ſhy and cautious than They ? If it be tolerable in Them, it is ſo in us. Why then do we boggle at the ſame Actions ? And when we do them, why ſhould we be troubled and diſſatisfied ? *We* live and act as *others*, and ſome of them are counted very good and honeſt Men: And then ſurely we cannot do amiſs. *This* is the Language of great Numbers of Perſons every where. By looking on *others*, they learn to defend the ſame Sins in their own Practices, and thus they are not ſenſible that they are *Sinners*, merely becauſe they follow the Example of ſuch as *are ſo*.

And there is a Second *Miſchief*, that is the uſual Conſequent of Men's *comparing themſelves with others*, and that is *this*; by this Means they oftentimes ſee, that they are not *ſo bad* as others, and hereupon they conceive high Thoughts of themſelves, and are pleaſed with all that they do, and never diſcern that Swarm of Vices which lodges in them. It is enough, that in ſome Things they are *better* than their Neighbours; they *outvie* many that they converſe with, and they are not guilty of ſeveral Diſorders which they ſpy in their Brethren. When they compare themſelves with great Sinners, they ſee that there are others more ungodly than themſelves in the World: And hence they take Occaſion to bleſs themſelves, and are confidently perſuaded, that their Condition is very good, and that they are the Favourites of Heaven. This they think they may be ſure of, becauſe their Lives are not ſo foully ſtained as *others*: Whereas in the mean Time they regard not the *inward Filthineſs* of their Souls: and beſides this, other Vices reign in their Lives and Practices. Thus they deceive themſelves.

Seventhly, There are others, who *deceive themſelves* by *preſuming on God's Mercy*. God is good and gracious (ſay they) his Mercy is over *all his Works*, and ſurely it will be over *all our Sins*. We cannot therefore but expect Favour of God; he will be pitiful and compaſſionate; he that made us will ſave us. We are all Sinners, even the beſt of us, and therefore God will not be *exact* in marking what we have done amiſs. We hope God will mercifully paſs by our Offences. Or, if he doth not, it is but *Repenting* at laſt, and that is ſoon done: For we may repent when we liſt. Repentance is nothing elſe but a Crying, Lord have Mercy upon us; *This* we hope we ſhall do before we die, and then all is well. The Thief at the *laſt* Hour found Mercy; and why ſhould we think it will be denied to us at that Time ? Or, Suppoſe we be not pardoned here, but deſcend to the Regions of infernal Darkneſs, we entertain good Hopes that their charitable Opinion will prove true, who hold, that God will ſave all at laſt, and that damned Souls and Devils themſelves ſhall be reſcued from Hell after they have been there long enough.

Thus many vile Sinners are apt to *deceive themſelves* by preſuming on God's Mercy and Goodneſs, and their own Salvation. You often hear it from the Mouths of the moſt Carnal and Senſual, that *they hope to be ſaved*. Thoſe that live in Luſt and Uncleanneſs, in Covetouſneſs and inordinate Love of the World, in Lying and Deceiving, in Drunkenneſs and Intemperance, in all

Debauchery and Prophanneſs plead for themſelves that God is merciful, and will ſave them. And indeed there is nothing ſo generally preſumed upon as Salvation and Mercy. But theſe Men ought to remember, that as God is *merciful*, ſo he is *juſt*, and he will not ſuffer obſtinate Sinners to go unpuniſhed. He is a *conſuming Fire*, and will devour all refractory and ſtubborn Offenders. Tho' his Mercy is over all his *Works*, yet *Sin* is none of *his Works*, and he hates and abhors nothing but *Sin*. Theſe Men muſt call to mind what is ſaid in *Iſai.* xxvii. 11. *He that made them, will not have mercy on them; and he that formed them, will ſhew them no favour.* Yea, they cannot expect to find Mercy, becauſe they wilfully tranſgreſs both againſt their Maker and Redeemer. He will ſeverely, but moſt juſtly, doom them to everlaſting Puniſhment, becauſe they prefer the Pleaſures of Sin, which are but for a Seaſon, before the Pleaſures and Glories of Eternity.

And as for *Repentance*, they ſhall know, that after a long Continuance in Sin, and refuſing to be reclaimed, there will ſuch a *Hardneſs* ſeize upon them, that they ſhall not be able to recall themſelves, and to be ſenſible of their Miſcarriages, and to turn unto God in Sincerity. And they groſsly delude themſelves when they think that Repentance is ſo *eaſy a Work*, and that it can be ſo ſoon performed: For Repentance is not a ſlight Calling upon God and asking him Forgiveneſs, but it is a thorough Change of our whole Lives and Converſations, and cannot be rightly finiſhed without much Difficulty; and if they *continue* in their Sins, they will not have *Time* to perform it.

And whereas they imagine, that they may be releaſed from their Torments when they have endured them a conſiderable Time, *this* is a ſtrong Deluſion, and they ſhall experience the Truth and Reality of God's Threatnings, *viz.* that the Damned ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord, and that eternal and endleſs Torments are prepared not only for the Devil and his Angels, but for all thoſe hardened Sinners, who would not be reclaimed by God's Judgments or Mercies in this Life. *This is* the true State of Things, and therefore when they fondly rely on God's Goodneſs and Philanthropy, his Mercy and Clemency, his Pity and Compaſſion, they deal *deceitfully* with themſelves, and run into inevitable Perdition by their *own Preſumption.* He that lives a wicked Life, and reſolves to do ſo, hath no Reaſon at all to lay Claim to the divine Mercy, and to promiſe himſelf Pardon and Favour. And yet great Numbers of Men in the World do *this*, and conſequently they ruin and deſtroy themſelves for ever.

Laſtly, How many are there, who *deceive themſelves* by their *Pleas* and *Excuſes which they make*, perſuading themſelves, that *theſe* will exempt them from the Wrath which is to come, and that as long as they make Uſe of theſe, they are ſafe? I will mention them particularly.

1. Some plead *Ignorance*, and think that this will be a ſufficient Excuſe. They have not been bleſſed, they ſay, with ſo much Light as others; they have not had Opportunities to be throughly informed of their Duty, and of their Danger, and to be acquainted with the Evil of Sin, and the miſerable Conſequences that inſue it. But (alas!) *this* is a poor and ſorry Excuſe, and will do them no Service at all. For the Light of *Nature* and *Reaſon* dictates to them all *moral Duties*; as they are *Men*, and endued with rational Faculties, they underſtand what they are to do, and they cannot but feel in their Minds an Averſeneſs to moſt of thoſe Sins which they commit. And then as for the *peculiar Duties of Chriſtianity*, they are revealed unto them by the Coming of Chriſt, and by the Preaching of the Apoſtles, and the ſacred Records of the holy Scripture. The Contents of their Duty, as they are *Chriſtians*, are plainly ſet before them. They have the *Bible*, particularly the *New Teſtament* to conſult. There all the revealed Truths of the Goſpel are preſented to them; and the Miniſters of God's Word do frequently inculcate and urge thoſe Truths upon them. They may be inſtructed in their Duty if they will; and it is their own Fault if they be not. The Ignorance then which they plead is voluntary, and therefore is ſinful, and conſequently can be no real Plea. They might have corrected their Errour and Ignorance, and they had

Means afforded them for that End, but they refuſed to make Uſe of them, and this they did wilfully and out of Choice. Away then with this fooliſh and groundleſs Excuſe of *Ignorance*. And yet ſo it is, that ſome are wont to plead *this*, and thereby promote their everlaſting Ruin and Perdition.

2. There are thoſe that lay the Fault on *Adam*. *So far* they run back for an *Excuſe*. They plead their *original Depravation*, they complain that they contracted a Weakneſs and Infirmity by the Fall of the firſt Man, and they are thereby become unable to reſiſt Sin, or to diſcharge their Duty. It is impoſſible (they ſay) to live uprightly and piouſly, becauſe of that unavoidable and invincible Infirmity of the Fleſh. They cannot practiſe thoſe Chriſtian Vertues which are enjoined them: For their Nature is corrupted and defiled, and how can any Thing that is clean and pure proceed from them? This they hope will be accepted as a *good Excuſe*. But if you conſider Things aright there is no Reaſon that it ſhould. For whether you look upon this Excuſe as made Uſe of by thoſe Perſons who are deſigned for Happineſs by the Undertakings of Chriſt Jeſus, but are yet unconverted and in their Sins; or made Uſe of by thoſe who are left to periſh in their Sins, the Excuſe is not to be admitted.

For as to the *Former*, I ask to what Purpoſe did the Son of God come down from Heaven, and undertake the Reſtoring of loſt Man? To what Purpoſe doth he give us the Helps and Aſſiſtances of his *Spirit?* Why doth *Grace* abound? Is it not to this End, that the carnal Principle ſhould be weakened and ſubdued, that the Loſs which we ſuſtained by original Sin ſhould be repaired, that the primitive Righteouſneſs ſhould be recovered, that Man's Nature ſhould be amended, that the Infirmities he had contracted ſhould be removed, and that we ſhould be endued with a more than ordinary Strength to perform God's Will, and to obſerve his Laws? The *Second Adam* takes away the Defects which came by the *Firſt Adam*. The Righteouſneſs and Merits of Chriſt Jeſus procure us an Ability and Power to do what is commanded us: And altho' we cannot ſerve God *perfectly and without Sin*, yet the compleat and perfect Righteouſneſs of Chriſt is imputed to us, and our Sins ſhall not hurt us, if we *ſtrive* againſt them continually, and with Sincerity and Uprightneſs of Heart do what is enjoined us, notwithſtanding many Infirmities and Failings accompany our beſt Endeavours and Actions, by Reaſon of inbred Corruption which we derived from our firſt Parents.

As to the *latter* Sort of Perſons, if the foreſaid Excuſe be made by them, it is of no Force; for tho' that natural Defilement which they labour under, and that Diſability which they contracted by *Adam*'s Fall make it impoſſible for them to diſcharge their Duty aright, and ſo as it may be acceptable to God, yet it doth not make them uncapable of doing every Thing that God requires them. Notwithſtanding their original Darkneſs and Depravity, they have ſtill a Light left them to direct them into the Knowledge of the great Duties of Morality, and they ſee the Turpitude and Deformity that are in vicious Actions: And they find that their Conſciences recoil at the Commiſſion of ſome Sins. And beſides, the Perſons I am ſpeaking of have yet a much greater Light and Diſcovery vouchſafed to them in the Writings of the inſpired Prophets and Apoſtles, the one in the *Old Teſtament*, the other in the *New*, whereby they have ſome peculiar Doctrines and Precepts revealed to them. Now, it is in their Power, notwithſtanding the Infirmity derived to them from *Adam*, to act in *ſome degree* and *meaſure* according to both theſe Lights, that of natural Reaſon and Morality, and the other of revealed Religion. But becauſe they do not ſo, but act againſt their *Knowledge* and againſt the *Ability* which they have, they are on that Account juſtly condemned. The *Excuſe* then above-named is frivolous and impertinent; and yet ſuch is the Wickedneſs of many Perſons, that they will not forbear uſing it, tho' it tends (as is moſt apparent) to their Deſtruction and Damnation.

3. Some lay the Fault on *Satan*, and *he* it is (they ſay) that hinders them from Entring in at the Strait Gate. He is always aſſaulting them, and will not let them be quiet. His Importunities and Sollicitations are ſo powerful that

they cannot evade them. The Tempter will not ſuffer them to attend to their Duty, and to mind Religion, and to follow the Ways of Chriſt. But *this Plea*, which is taken from the Strength of the *Devil's* Temptations, is not valid: For tho' it is true, undeniably true, that the Devil tempts and ſollicits Men, yet he cannot make them *yield* to him unleſs *they will*. He ſeeks whom he may devour, but he devours not whom he will. Man muſt conſent, otherwiſe the Temptations of that evil Spirit are ſucceſsleſs. The Devil may (if I may ſo ſay) look in at the Window, but he cannot break open the Door. Or, he may *knock* at the Door, but he cannot *forcibly enter*. If we keep the Door faſt by Prayer and Watching, and Endeavouring; he may (it is true) make a great Noiſe, and diſturb, and diſquiet us, but it is our own Fault, if he finds Admiſſion. This never happens, but when we deſiſt from praying unto God, and imploring his Aid and Favour, and when we ceaſe watching and ſtanding upon our Guard, and when we become careleſs and ſupine. Then Satan enters, and takes Poſſeſſion. But this is cauſed by our own Folly and Negligence, and becauſe we will not attend to St. *James's* Advice in *James* iv. 7. *Reſiſt the devil.* And in the next Words he tells you what is the happy *Effect* of it, *He ſhall fly from you.* Your bold Reſiſtance puts this Enemy to Flight: But Men generally comply with his Suggeſtions, they tamely reſign themſelves to him, and become his Captives and Vaſſals. Thus Men periſh: But here is no *Excuſe* for it.

4. There are Thoſe who lay the Fault upon *God*. Rather than they will want an *Excuſe*, they will lay the Blame *here*. This indeed was the *Excuſe* and Plea of Sinners at the very firſt. *Adam* caſt his Sin upon *God*. [The Woman that *thou* gaveſt me, ſhe gave me of the Tree, and I did eat.] *Gen.* iii. 12. If *thou* hadſt not given me this Woman, I might have been innocent. And ever ſince that Time Sinners have laid the Fault on the Almighty, they have made him the Author of their Sins and Miſcarriages; they have accuſed him, to excuſe themſelves. *This* may be the Meaning of thoſe Words of *Solomon* in *Prov.* xix. 3. "*The fooliſhneſs of man perverteth* "*his way, his heart fretteth againſt the Lord. i. e.* it is Man's own Folly and Sottiſhneſs, that he acts wickedly and perverſely: And yet ſometimes he is ready to impute his Fault to the Almighty, he ſeems to fret and be angry with God, becauſe his Life is ſo wicked and ungodly. He murmurs againſt God, becauſe * his Decrees and Providence (he ſays) have ſo ordered and diſpoſed Cauſes, that he is thereby tempted to Sin.

* —ἐγὼ δ᾽ οὐκ αἴτιος εἰμὶ,
Ἀλλὰ Ζεὺς ϗ Μοῖρα.——
Hom. Il. 19.

Deus mihi impulſor fuit, is me ad illam illexit. Terent. in Aulular.

But nothing can be more derogatory to the Nature of God, than to ſay or think that he is any Ways the Author of Sin, and that either his Decrees or Providence contribute towards Vice and Wickedneſs. This is directly confuted by thoſe peremptory Words of St. *James, chap.* i. *v.* 13, 14. *Let no man ſay, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for as God cannot be tempted with evil; ſo neither tempteth he any man.* It is implied here, that ſome are apt to ſay, God tempts them to ſin, and therefore is the Cauſe of their Sins. But ſaith the Apoſtle, *Let no man ſay* ſo. But if you would know the *true Riſe* and Cauſe of your being tempted to ſin, the Apoſtle acquaints you with it in the following Verſe, *Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own luſt and enticed. Then when luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſin: and ſin, when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth death.* So then the *Reaſon*, why Sin proves *deadly* and *fatal*, and deſtroys Mens Souls and Bodies, is their own voluntary conſenting to the Commiſſion of Sin. Mark the Words which follow in *v.* 16. [Do not *err* my beloved Brethren.] As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, you are apt to be *miſtaken* about this Point, but I caution you againſt it. By no means be *deceived*; lay not the Fault on *God*, when *yourſelves* are wholly to be blamed. God cannot be the Author of, or Tempter to Sin. He that *hates and abhors* Sin, and ſeverely *puniſhes* it, cannot be the *Cauſe* of it. Let no Man then *excuſe* himſelf for his Sins, becauſe of the inevitable *Deſtiny of God's Decrees*.

It is ſaid indeed, that the *Turks* are of Opinion, that every Man's Fortune is writ in his Forehead by the Angel that ſtood by him, when he firſt came into the World. And hence it is, that they are wont on all Occaſions to blame *Deſtiny* and to charge *Fate* with their Faults, and not *themſelves.* If any profeſſing the *Chriſtian Religion* ſeem to favour this Opinion, I doubt not to ſay, that they *err not knowing the Scriptures.* In thoſe holy Writings the *Sins* of Men are laid upon *themſelves*, and ſo is their *Ruin and Deſtruction*, Hoſ. xiii. 9. *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf, but in me is thy help.* And our Saviour gives us a true Account of Man's Damnation in *John* v. 40. *Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life.* Ye voluntarily reject the Offers of Salvation and Happineſs. It is your own actual and perſonal Fault, that you periſh. But as for the *Decrees*, they neceſſitate no Man to ſin: They force none, yet none can act againſt them. They determine and fix the *Event* of all Actions, but they are not the Cauſes of them.

Thus I have ſhewed in ſeveral Particulars, what are the the *Hindrances* of Mens Salvation, and how their own groſs Deluſions are the Cauſe of their everlaſting Ruin. All this is under that general Head, which I undertook to inſiſt upon, namely, whence it is, that ſo *few* are ſaved, and that it is ſo *difficult* a Thing to enter in at the Strait Gate.

There are other *Impediments*, as *Want of Conſideration* and *Reſolution.* Men conſider not; Men reſolve not; and thence endanger their Souls: But I have largely inſiſted on theſe Particulars in an other Place, and therefore diſmiſs them at preſent.

But take this as the *Sum* of all the former Particulars, and indeed of all that can be ſaid, *viz.* that every one generally would be ſaved in that Way which pleaſes them; otherwiſe they will not. They refuſe to take the right Methods of Salvation, they will not be perſuaded to do what is indiſpenſably required of them in order to it. We read in *Mat.* xiii. 45. that the *kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man ſeeking goodly pearls, who when he had found one pearl of great Price, he went and ſold all that he had, and bought it.* But Men are loth to imitate this wiſe Merchant: They will not ſell all, yea, they will part with *nothing* to buy the Pearl of great Price, to purchaſe Chriſt and eternal Salvation. Men will not go to the Price of Heaven. *This Pearl* is caſt before thoſe ſottiſh Creatures which underſtand not the true Value of it. *Acorns* are preferred before *Pearls.* The trifling Vanities and Accommodations of this World are more heartily prized than the Glories of Eternity.

If they may be happy notwithſtanding the indulging of all their Luſts and wicked Deſires, they are willing to be happy, but not otherwiſe. If they may take Chriſt for their Saviour and Redeemer, but not for their King and Lord, *i. e.* in plain Terms, if they might be ſaved without Obedience, they are hugely contented with the Propoſition. Or, if they might have Heaven at their Beck, and after a lewd and prophane Life ſpent altogether in the Devil's Service, they might be permitted to do all that which belongs to their Salvation, on a Sick-bed, and ſo to paſs into endleſs Felicity; this they would like very well, and you could not gratify them more than by propounding ſuch Things to them. If it may ſerve their Turns to part with their Sins, when they can keep them no longer, if it may ſuffice not to act ſome Sins, when there is an Impoſſibility of doing it, then perhaps they will be Converts in good Time.

But be it known to 'em, the Manſions of Heaven were not made for ſuch forced Gueſts. They are not ſo void of Inhabitants, as to receive Perſons of this Quality: No, an other Place is deſtined for them, *viz.* the infernal Regions of Darkneſs, the Lake which burns with Fire and Brimſtone.

I beſeech you ſeriouſly conſider theſe ſeveral Particulars which I have tendered to you. If theſe plain and practical Truths were once fixed on your Minds, and took Poſſeſſion of your Hearts, I doubt not but you would ſoon feel the Influence and Energy of them in your Lives. But the Miſery of Mankind is *this*, that they ſeldom *ponder* theſe Things, they buſy not their Heads with theſe weighty Conſiderations; and hence it is, that their Lives and Converſations are wicked and prophane, and when they quit this World, they deſcend into Hell without Recovery. And thus I think I have *ſufficiently* proved from the ſundry Particulars offered to you, that it is a *more difficult*

Thing to be ſaved, than Men commonly imagine, and that *few*, *very few*, (in Compariſon of thoſe that are damned) ſhall attain to Salvation and Happineſs.

It remains now, that I make ſome *Inferences* from both the Propoſitions which I inſiſted upon, *1ſt*, From the *Difficulty* of being ſaved; *2dly*, From the *Paucity* of thoſe that are ſaved.

Firſt, Is it ſo *hard a Thing* to be ſaved, then make it not *harder*. Is the Way to Heaven *narrow*, and the Gate *ſtrait*, then do not make it *ſtraiter* than it is. Stop not up the Way by your own Fault. You have no need to render Heaven and Happineſs *more difficult* than indeed they are. Take it in *Theſe* Two Particulars, Straiten not the Gate, *1ſt*, By Limiting the Grace of God; *2dly*, By Impoſing unneceſſary Auſterities on your ſelves.

In the *Firſt* Place, I ſay, Straiten not the Gate, by Limiting the Grace of God, and ſuſpecting his Willingneſs to ſave *your ſelves* and *others*. Firſt, as to *your ſelves*, make not the Gate too ſtrait by wilful Deſpairing and Deſpondency of the Favour of God. Refuſe not to accept of Mercy, when it is offered to you. Aſſure your ſelves of this, that God receives all true Penitents. Take Care to be of this Number, and then be fully perſuaded that the Gate of Heaven is open to you. See that you do not exclude yourſelves from Mercy by your own voluntary Impenitence and Diſobedience.

Again, Do not ſtraiten the Gate of Life in reſpect of *others*. God is good, therefore let not thine Eye be evil. Confine not Heaven to a Party, to a particular Sect. Remember that St. *Paul* rebukes the *Corinthians* for crying out ſeverally, and in an excluſive Manner, *I am of Paul*, *I am of Apollos*, *I am of Cephas*. This would come at laſt (if it were not prevented) to this, *I am ſaved, and thou art damned*, you differ from me, and therefore you cannot go to Heaven with me. You and I cannot agree about *ſome Points* in the Chriſtian Religion, therefore you have no true Religion at all, but I am ſure that I have. You may obſerve, that ſome Men come with their Gold-Scales, and are hugely exact and accurate in Weighing other Men's Judgments and Opinions: And if they do not find them preciſely even with their own, they preſently condemn them. Theſe Men make Religion a kind of Clock-work, a nice, intricate, artificial Thing; and it muſt be wound up according to their Fancies, it muſt ſtrike according to their particular Notions, or elſe it doth not go right. Be not of this Number, I beſeech you; do not uncharitably cenſure others, merely becauſe they differ from you in ſome leſſer Matters. Make not your Religion, your Chriſtianity conſiſt in Indiviſibles and Mathematical Points. Quarrel not about Shadows and Circumſtances, when you agree in the main and ſubſtantial Things of Religion. This argues Self-conceit, and an Over-valuing of your ſelves, which is contrary to the humble Spirit of true Chriſtians. The *New Jeruſalem* hath more *Gates* than one; and do not think, that theſe ſtand open only for you and your Party.

And as you muſt not peremptorily condemn All that vary from you in ſome diſputable Points of Religion, ſo you ought not to pronounce a final Sentence againſt any Man, be he never ſo wicked and ungodly. Judge him not as to his future State in the next Life. He may be an other Man before he leaves this World. God can change his Heart and Life: *Manaſſes* may prove a true Penitent; *Mary Magdalen* may be diſpoſſeſs'd; *Saul* may ceaſe to be a Perſecutor; the rough and boiſterous Jaylor may be converted, and become tame and tractable. Let me tell you, it is paſt your Skill to aſſign the Names of thoſe, who are written in the Book of Life. Be not, therefore, poſitive in your Cenſures of any Man, as knowing that the worſt of Men have been call'd and converted.

Secondly, Make not the Gate ſtraiter than 'tis, by impoſing *unneceſſary Auſterities* and *Hardſhips* on your ſelves. Many godly and precious Souls are blameable as to This. They give themſelves up to unneceſſary Sorrows and Lamentations, they are immoderate in their Mournings. Sometimes they deny themſelves the lawful Pleaſures and innocent Enjoyments of this Life. They diſturb their Minds with needleſs Scruples, and they are afraid they diſpleaſe

God in every Thing they do. It was a ſtrange Illuſion of St. *Jerom*, (otherwiſe a pious Father) that he fancied an Angel appear'd to him, and chaſtiſed him for reading *Tully*'s *Orations*, and other good *Latin* Authors. A pedantick Spirit this is, and no ſober Man ſubmits to it, and is govern'd by it. You muſt ſtudy to know what is innocent and lawful, and not to enſnare your ſelves by fond Scrupuloſity. Make not Religion over-hard by your own Fault. Where the Goſpel gives you Liberty, you may ſafely make Uſe of it. Let me admoniſh you not to lace your ſelves too ſtrait, ſo that you can't *breathe freely*, and diſcharge the Duties of Religion with Eaſe and Chearfulneſs. Aſſure your ſelves, that Chriſtianity doth not require of you a continual Mourning, and perpetual Sighing. You are not commanded to appear always with wet Eyes, and dejected Countenances, and ſorrowful Hearts. No: It is your Duty to rejoice in God, to gild your Faces with Smiles, and to baniſh all needleſs Fears and Scruples, and to let the World ſee you ſerve a good and bountiful Maſter.

But there hath been, and is ſtill an *other* Sort of Men, who make Religion *too harſh* and *ſevere*. Theſe ſuperſtitiouſly diſcipline their Bodies with exceſſive and ſometimes inhuman Hardſhips, of which you may read ſeveral Examples in *Sozomen*, *Socrates*, and other Church-Hiſtorians. *Simeon Stylites* is famed for a great Maſter of Auſterities. That which was peculiar to him, was, That he was always tied by the Leg to a Pillar with a great Iron Chain. That was his Place of Reſidence, and he never ſtirr'd from it. For this Reaſon *Theodoret* calls him * *The great Wonder of the World*: And the ſame Writer tells us of one *Macedonius*, who was called † *The Barley-Eater*, who fed on nothing but Barley and Pulſe, and was named *Gubba*, becauſe it was his Cuſtom to ſtand all his Days in a *Ditch*, that Word ſignifying a Ditch in the *Syriack* Tongue. For my Part, I think this Man may with as much Reaſon be called *The Wonder of the World*, as the other; nay, with greater Reaſon: For it was no ſuch Marvel, that the other never ſtirr'd from his Pillar, becauſe he was tied faſt to it: But that this Man ſhould take up his Station in a Ditch, where there was nothing to hold and faſten him, was a more admirable Thing, if we may admire any Thing of this Sort. But this Saint, who lived in ancient Times, is out-done by modern ones; for they tell us, That St. *Goodrick* (a Saint of a very hot Complexion, it ſeems) uſed to ſtand Praying up to his Neck in the River, which ran by his Cell, whereas the other Man contented himſelf with a *dry Ditch*, for I do not remember that the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorian gives us an Account of any *Water* in it.

Do not ſome Perſons make Religion too ſevere, by *Vowing a wilful Poverty*, by their affecting Rags and Beggary, and placing a Kind of Saintſhip in them? Do they not make Religion too difficult by their *uneaſy Penances*, by wearing of Sack-cloth and Hair-Shirts; by going bare-foot; (as I remember our Chronicles tell us that Queen *Maud*, Wife to King *Henry* the Firſt, tho' ſhe was ſo great a Perſonage, yet uſually went to Church bare-foot;) by laying on heavy Loads of Iron on their Bodies; by macerating their Fleſh with exceſſive Watchings and frequent Faſtings; and by other extravagant Ways of Mortification? If a Man ſhould go into ſome Monaſteries, and ſee upon ſome Days how the Folks that inhabit there, do miſerably ſlaſh and ſcourge themſelves, would he not (think you) take them for a Sort of religious Bedlams, a Kind of frantick Devotioniſts, who make nothing of laying violent Hands on themſelves, and upon their own Skins write their Folly and Madneſs in legible Characters, and thoſe *bloody* ones?

Beſides this Whipping and Schooling of their Carcaſſes, they have a Cuſtom alſo to take long and tedious Journeys, which they call *Pilgrimages*. Away they trudge with wonderful Devotion to viſit *Jeruſalem*, and the *Holy Sepulchre* there. Or if they have not a Mind to travel ſo far as the Holy Land, they make a Halt at *Loretto*, and *purpoſely* viſit the Virgin *Mary* there, and *by the Bye*, ask how her *Son* doth. Or theſe Pilgrims repair to the Shrines of ſome *other Saints*, and viſit the Tombs of ſome Martyrs; and this *laborious Travelling* is reckon'd a worthy Enterprize in their Religion.

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* μέγα θαῦμα τῆς οἰκουμένης.

† κριθόφαγος.

And ſuch, likewiſe, is reputed their Shutting themſelves up in a Cloyſter. This Piece of Self-denial and Auſterity hath been much in Faſhion: Yea, even *Kings* quitted their *Palaces* for a *Monaſtery*; put off their Royal Robes and *Crowns*, to put on a *Cowl*. I could mention ſeveral Kings of diverſe Nations; and among the *Saxon* Kings of this Iſland it was very common. I could name you half a Score at leaſt of thoſe crowned Heads, that turned *Monks*, and died in that Retirement. After a wicked and debauch'd Life, after Bloodſhed, Perjury, Rapine, Whoredom, and all execrable Actions, the Cuſtom was to fly to a religious Houſe, to wear a Cowl, to embrace a monaſtick Life. And ſome of them verily thought, that Entring thro' the *Wicket* of a Monaſtery, was Entring in at the *Strait Gate*, it was the direct Way to Heaven and Happineſs.

Theſe are the *Severities* which Men have impoſed upon themſelves and others. This is the harſh Phyſick, theſe are the auſtere Medicines, which ſome ſpiritual Phyſicians, *Italian Mountebanks* I ſhould ſay, preſcribe them. But alas they leave the Patient as ſick and diſtemper'd as they found him. Theſe do not remove the Matter of the Diſeaſe, but only palliate the Diſtemper, and render the Condition of the Perſons more *dangerous*, and at laſt *Incurable*. Who bids theſe Men clog themſelves with unneceſſary and ſuperſtitious Auſterities? Who hath required theſe Things at their Hands? Who authorizes them thus to ſtraiten the Way to Heaven? Or rather, let me remind them of *this*, that *every ſtrait Way* is not the *Way to Heaven*.

Even the *Pagan* and *Idolatrous* Worſhippers uſed themſelves to great Hardſhips and Severities. We read that *Baal*'s Prieſts *cut and ſlaſh'd themſelves with knives and launcets till the blood guſh'd out*; and the Sacred Hiſtory tells us, that it was their *Manner* to do ſo, 1 *King*. xviii. 28. We are inform'd, that among the ancient *Perſians* the Worſhippers of *Mithra*, *i. e.* the Sun, were to undergo as many Labours as *Hercules*, before they could be admitted to the Secrets of that Service. They were to ſuffer Hunger, Whipping, Firing, *&c.* a Dozen Torments in all, before they could be ſworn Votaries. And moſt juſtly indeed, ſaith a * godly Father, were theſe Men thus tortured in *Mithra*'s Temple: For they deſerve ſuch Puniſhment, who worſhip ſuch Gods. Modern Hiſtorians tell us, that the *Derviſes*, a Sort of Hermites and Devotioniſts among the *Indians*, uſe ſtrange, and almoſt incredible Severities to themſelves. I find it to be a Catholick Uſage among them to *wound* themſelves in Honour of their Idols. I might mention here the religious Mahometans of *Suratte*, who (as we are told by a † late Writer) place Vertue in Want of Eaſe: Some of them will ſtand in the ſame Poſture Eight or Ten Years together, being ſupported by a great Rope under their Arms.

And not only among the *Heathens* and *Mahometans*, but among the *Jews* there were thoſe that ſuperſtitiouſly ſet themſelves hard Tasks, and thought they merited by performing them. Thus did the *Phariſees*, who had their Name from *Separation*, becauſe they ſeparated themſelves from others, and were diſtinguiſh'd from the reſt of that Nation by their particular Severities, and the Singularity of their Lives. *Epiphanius* ſets down their *ſtrict Obſervances* after this Manner: "Some enjoin'd themſelves an Eight or Ten Years "Continence; ſome lay on Planks Nine Inches broad, that when they ſlept "they might fall off them upon the Floor, and thereby be awaken'd to their "Devotions. Others put Stones under them for the ſame Purpoſe, *viz.* That "they might be kept awake. Others lay on Thorns and Briers for the ſame "End, and put Thorns into the Fringes of their Garments, that they might be "pricked: They beat themſelves againſt Walls"; and other Things of the like Nature That Writer mentions. Thus it is clear, that the Sect of the *Phariſees* was, as St. *Paul* (who was one himſelf) witneſſeth of them, *the moſt ſtrait Sect* of the *Jewiſh* Religion. And yet this *Strait Way* was not the Way to Heaven, as our Saviour often acquaints them.

Some of the Modern *Jews*, (as *Buxtorf* tells us) imitate thoſe of old in their fooliſh Auſterities. On the Day of Expiation after they have confeſs'd their Sins, they beat and whip one an other. In this Flagellation (which is called by them *Malkuth*) and in many other Things of this Nature thoſe of the *Church of Rome* do plainly *Judaize*, or the *Jews* ſymbolize with *Rome*,

affecting

* *Greg. Naz.* Orat. 3.

† *Mr. Carré Voiages des Indies orientales.*

affecting an exceſſive Strictneſs, and delighting in outward and bodily Auſterities. We may well apply here that of the Apoſtle, in *Col.* ii. 23. *Theſe Things have a Shew of Wiſdom in Will-worſhip, and Humility, and Neglecting the Body.* Theſe Men ſeem to ſtudy *Humility and Mortification*, but theſe are ſpoil'd by a ſuperſtitious Conceit of Satisfying and Meriting. Thus Satan by his Subtilty hath ſeduced Multitudes of People: For he, perſuading them that they muſt enter into Life thro' a ſtrait Gate, hath thereby reconciled them to the moſt *inhuman* Practices. He, perceiving that *his Way*, which is the Way of *Death*, was traduced as a *Broad Way*, craftily undertook to make it a *Narrow* One, and accordingly introduced all thoſe Hardſhips which the *Popiſh Religion* eſpecially braggs of.

And thoſe of that Perſuaſion condemn *Us*, becauſe we practiſe not the ſame; they brand us as ſoft and effeminate, becauſe we refuſe to undergo thoſe Severities. I will not requite their ill Opinion of us, by peremptorily judging them. Some of them are rather to be pitied, than condemned. I am ſo charitable as to think, that ſome of that Perſuaſion do what they do in the Simplicity of their Hearts, and they have not the Happineſs to underſtand themſelves better. But if any of them condemn us, let not this diſturb us; for we may remember, that Chriſt himſelf was ſpoken againſt, becauſe he was not *ſevere* enough. They charged him with the Breach of the Sabbath, they blamed him for tranſgreſſing the Traditions of the Elders; they diſliked him, becauſe he did not comply with them in their ſuperſtitious Waſhings and Purifyings, in their frequent Faſtings and Watchings, and other Auſterities, which I mentioned to you out of *Epiphanius*. Becauſe our Saviour was of a free Converſation, and was not ſo demure and auſtere as ſome of them, they cried out of him, as a Glutton and Wine-bibber. But the Truth is, he had Reaſon to cry out againſt *them*, for their affecting to be more ſevere than they ought to have been, for impoſing undue Severities on themſelves, for practiſing an unlawful and unwarrantable Strictneſs. And in this they are followed by many at this Day, who think they merit by their corporal Mortifications and Penances.

This indeed hath a *Reſemblance* of the *Strait Gate* and the *Narrow Way*: But it is a mere Reſemblance, and hath no Reality in it: For theſe Men make a *Strait Entrance* into the *Wide Gate*, and a *Narrow Path* in the *Broad Way*, that leadeth to Deſtruction. Be not deceived then by falſe Repreſentations of Things, underſtand yourſelves aright in this Matter, and do not make the Gate ſtraiter either to your ſelves or others, than really it is, by any of the Ways before-mention'd.

And beſides, do not ſtraiten and make it uneaſy by your wilful Ignorance of the Ways of Holineſs, by your Sloth and Negligence, by your evil Cuſtoms, and contracted Habits, or by any other Default of yours whatſoever. And ſo much for the *1ſt Inference* from the Words, which was by Way of *Caution*, there being ſome Perſons who miſunderſtand the Text, or rather *wilfully pervert* it; and becauſe the Gate to Life is ſtrait, therefore they endeavour to make it *yet ſtraiter*. But now more *directly* from the Premiſſes, I ſhall make the *following Deductions*.

In the *Second* Place then, is the Gate ſo *ſtrait*, is the Way to Heaven ſo *difficult*, then the fond Opinion of thoſe Men is baffled and confuted, who perſuade themſelves that the Purchaſe of Heaven is cheap and eaſy. They need not take much Pains, they ſay, to attain to Happineſs. God made Man for it, and He will be ſure to beſtow it on him. Hence they take no Care how they act; they ſit ſtill, and careleſly look about them, but never mind their proper Duty and Concern. They hope to get to Heaven as well as the Beſt, but they are never ſollicitous about the *Way* to it. This is a Sign indeed, that they think it an *Eaſy* Thing to get thither. But this is a groſs Miſtake and Deluſion, and they will find it to be ſo in a ſhort Time, unleſs they correct their Error, and betake themſelves to a diligent Purſuit of thoſe Things, which muſt lead them to Happineſs. They will then be convinced of this Truth, that Religion muſt coſt them dear. They muſt take it with all it's Hardſhips. They muſt grapple with great Difficulties, they muſt ſweat and toil, and take a great deal of Pains, and be thankful, that at laſt (after all their Hazards) they can arrive to Life and Glory. Tho' the modern Philoſophers are of Opinion, that the Heavens are fluid and paſſable, yet one of the chief of the Ancients held, that they were ſolid and hard, and conſequently the Way thro' them not eaſy. This was his Hypotheſis in Aſtronomy, and it is true in a Theological Senſe. Whereas many believe the Heaven of the Bleſſed to be eaſily paſſable, it is a falſe Surmiſe, it is a groundleſs Notion; the Way to it, the Paſſage thro' it is very difficult: There muſt be great Care and Labour employ'd about it. And they are groſly miſtaken, who aſſert or think the contrary.

Thirdly, Seriouſly ſit down, and think how Few there are in the whole Heap and Herd of Mankind that attain to Heaven. This is a ſeaſonable Inference from the foregoing Doctrine. Your Thoughts and Meditations can't be exerciſed about a more important Subject than this. You have heard how difficult it is to purchaſe Happineſs, how few come to be Poſſeſſors of it, how many Things hinder us from it, how eaſily Men turn into the Way that leads to Hell and Miſery. O that you would now digeſt this in your ſerious Thoughts and Conſiderations. You ſee it is no eaſy and ſlight Matter to order our Converſation aright, and to arrive to an entire Compliance with the Divine Laws. It is good for us to obſerve this, and to conſider of it well; for many Men owe the great Failings of their Lives to this, that they never think how hard a Task it is to be truly religious and vertuous; but on the contrary, they reckon it to be very eaſy, and perſuade themſelves that Heaven and Happineſs are to be had at a cheap Rate. Which is a very dangerous and deſtructive Perſuaſion; for it betrays Men to that Sloth and Unconcernedneſs which prove their utter Ruin. Therefore there is Reaſon I ſhould commend this Conſideration to you.

I read in *Theodoret*, of a certain Hermite, who Fifteen Years together took upon him that ſolitary Sort of Life, inhabiting in a dark Cell in the Wilderneſs. And his Diet belike was as remarkable as his Lodging: For there was no Day ſo high with him, in which he exceeded above Bread and Water. And would you know what it was that made this Man turn Anchoret, and thus ſequeſter himſelf from the World, and that with too great Severity? If you'll believe that Author, it commenc'd upon this Occaſion, *viz.* This one ſerious Thought, that the greateſt Part of Men and Women in the World, are like to be damned. This it was, which made that conſidering Man retire from the Croud, and abandon the Multitude, and apply himſelf to a ſtrict (it is Pity it was an over-ſtrict) Way of Living. O that *you* would entertain the ſame Thoughts, that *you* would ſet apart ſome Hours to conſider of this ſad Subject, *viz.* That the *greateſt Numbers* of Men in the World take the Courſe to ruin themſelves eternally, and that *very few* are ſollicitous about their eternal State, and take Care of their Welfare in an other World. Here you ſit idle and unconcern'd, you never mind how the *Generality* of Men periſh.

The famous *Chryſoſtom*, in one of his Sermons to the People of *Antioch*, hath theſe remarkable Words, "How many do you think (ſaith he) of thoſe who are in this City, are ſaved? What I ſhall ſay will be grievous and harſh, but yet I will ſpeak it. Among ſo many Thouſands, one Hundred will ſcarcely be found that ſhall be ſaved, and I doubt of *them* too." This Plainneſs of that pious Father and Preacher, will juſtify me in my plain and impartial Addreſs to you at this Time. Of all this Aſſembly that I now ſpeak to, how few have truly repented of their Sins? How few have found the Grace of God powerfully working on their Hearts? How few have experienced a new Principle and Spirit in their Souls? How few have made Religion their Buſineſs, and greateſt Concern? Yea, I appeal to ſome of you that hear me this Day, whether your Conſciences do not tell you, that you never ſo much as once ſeriouſly thought of Saving your Souls, never thought of what you muſt do to be ſaved. Have not ſome of you been wholly careleſs as to this Matter? Oh that you would devote ſome Time to the ſerious Conſideration of theſe Things, and by the Bleſſing of the Almighty, it would prove very advantagious to you.

Fourthly, This Doctrine, which I have been diſcourſing of to you, reproves the Guiſe and Manner of Life which moſt Men addict themſelves to. Where do we ſee that Men live as if they had a Senſe of this Propoſition, That the Gate to eternal Life is ſtrait, and the Way to it narrow? Where do you obſerve Men behaving themſelves, as if it were a very hard Thing to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven? Wherever you look, you may find them walking diſorderly, looſely, and profanely: And as for the *Strict Way* of Living, it is generally ſpoken againſt, it is derided and mock'd at. But let us bluſh at our Behaviour, and at the general Demeanor of the World. Let us ſee and be perſuaded at laſt, that *That* is not the *beſt* Way, which is the *broadeſt* Way. Let us believe in good Earneſt, that it is hard to arrive at Heaven. We have a *great Task* before us, and 'tis *difficult* to perform it. The Thoughts, the Tongue, the Hand, the Life, and the whole Man are concern'd in this important Buſineſs. We muſt not think, ſpeak, and act as we pleaſe; we muſt not be looſe and exorbitant, we muſt not be left to our Liberty, we muſt not live as we would. We are confined and circumſcribed, we have a cloſe and ſtrait Gate to go through, and we cannot get through it into eternal Life without preſſing hard.

Fifthly, This Doctrine, which I have treated of, is Encouragement to thoſe that are reproach'd for Singularity and Preciſeneſs, and becauſe they will not do as others do, becauſe they will not ſwim with the Stream, but bear up againſt it, and go croſs to the ſinful World. Let this comfort them, that they are not in the *Broad Way*, the Way which is trod by moſt, which leads to Deſtruction; but that they have choſen the *Narrow Way*, which certainly conducts them to Life and Bliſs. Take Courage then, ye Servants of the moſt High; when the Men of the World think you unſociable, and revile you for not conforming yourſelves to their ſinful Practices; ſolace yourſelves with this, that you are in the Way to Salvation; and tho' you have but few Companions, yet it is better to be ſaved with a few, than to periſh with Company: As of old, it was more eligible to be with *Noah* and his ſelect Number in the Ark, than with the whole World in the Flood. Remember that you have the Fellowſhip of the Holy Trinity, of Angels, and of righteous Men. Theſe accompany you, when you are left of the World; and therefore be not diſmayed and dejected. Go on ſtill in the Diſcharge of your Duty; and be not ſollicitous to pleaſe Men, but God and your own Conſciences. Fix this upon your Minds, that you are not to live as other Men do: You are to be a *peculiar People*; and you are to ſhew it by being *zealous of good Works*, by being moſt affectionately and warmly devoted to Religion and Holineſs, when the Generality of Perſons are cold and indifferent. Let none wonder that good Men are *ſingular*, that they are *wary* and *cautious*, that they walk not as the Reſt: For they have no Deſire to fare as others do; *i. e.* they are not willing to periſh with the Multitude.

Sixthly then, I may add this in the next Place, as a proper *Inference*, Make not *Multitude* or *Number* an Argument in Actions of Religion. It is reported of a certain Pagan King, that being perſuaded to be baptized, ſtanding at the Font, he asked to what Place his Predeceſſors, or moſt of them were gone: It was anſwer'd, they went to Hell. To which he replied, It is beſt to follow the *moſt* rather than the *feweſt*, and ſo refuſed to receive Baptiſm, and perſiſted ſtill in his Paganiſm. The very *ſame Argument* induces Men generally to periſh eternally rather than to walk in the Way of Holineſs, and be everlaſtingly happy. They will do as the *moſt* do, whatever comes of it. But do not you think *that* to be beſt, which is done by the *moſt*; and think not that it is *ſafeſt* to go with the *Croud*. For as *Multitude* excuſes not a Man from *Sin*; ſo neither will it privilege him from *Puniſhment*. A King perhaps hath not Priſons enough to hold a very great Multitude of Offenders, and ſo the vaſt Number of them may make them fare the better. But it is not ſo with the King of Kings, the God of Heaven and Earth; he hath prepared *Tophet wide* enough for all thoſe wretched Creatures that ſhall come thither.

It is a *large* and *capacious* Priſon. And be it known unto Sinners, that *Multitude* will not mitigate, but increaſe their *Torment*. Therefore *Dives* (not out of Charity but Self-Love) would have been *alone*, if poſſible, in Hell. He knew, that Company would aggravate his Puniſhment.

Be not ſo fooliſh then as to ſin here for Company. Think not your Guilt is taken away by the *great Numbers* which attend you in your evil Actions. This is as if a Man ſhould believe, that he who roves upon the Seas, and robs with a Ship or Two is a *Pirate*, but he that doth the ſame with a whole *Squadron* is an honeſt Man: As if the *Number* of Adherents, not the *Action it ſelf*, made the Difference between them. Be *you* contented to be holy and righteous, and to do your Duty with great Faithfulneſs, altho' you are deſtitute of Aſſociates. Walk in the *Narrow Way*, and let not the *Solitarineſs* of it diſhearten you. Shun the *Broad Way*, and let not the great *Sholes and Flocks* of People that daily tread in it, encourage you to bear them Company. It is a peremptory Injunction in *Exod.* xxiii. 2. *Thou ſhalt not follow a multitude to do evil.* Go not after wicked Men, becauſe they are *many*. Follow not any Vice, for the Grandure of its *Retinue*. The * Moraliſt could ſuggeſt *this*, that Multitude is ſo far from being an Argument of Vertue and Goodneſs, that (on the contrary) it is a great Evidence of ſinful Enterprizes and Actions, becauſe the moſt Men are wicked and ungodly. It was a *Pythagorean* Precept, † *Go not in the publick Way*, *i. e.* in the Stile of Scripture, *Follow not a multitude*. For this is a Truth, which ſound Reaſon as well as the Word of God dictates: The Former no leſs than the Latter cautions us againſt complying with the *moſt*, becauſe theſe generally are the *worſt*.

If we go by the Poll, we muſt be vicious and debauch'd; if moſt Votes muſt carry it, then undoubtedly we muſt run into all Manner of Exceſs. The greateſt Part of the World follow their Luſts, and live as they liſt. They care not for Religion, they deſpiſe God and his Ways, they act according to their own depraved Inclinations, and no vicious Enterprize comes amiſs to them. Thus you are involved in great Dangers, you have a *Multitude* of evil Examples before you. A *huge Company* of Men are ready to warrant you in your licentious Ways. Whereupon perhaps you may be heard to ſpeak *Thus*, It will not become us to be wiſer than the *biggeſt Part of the World*. They ſurely are not Men out of their Wits, they underſtand what they do. Can we believe that ſuch *Multitudes* would throng and croud to *Hell?* Why ſhould we not follow their Example? It is certain, that if we do not, we ſhall be hooted at as Preciſians, and reproach'd as ſingular and conceited. That which I reply is *This*, you muſt be content to be *reproached and diſgraced* if you reſolve to lead a holy Life, and to follow God fully. You muſt be ſatisfied in your Duty, altho' the Generality of the World are diſpleaſed at it. You muſt avoid the *Broad Way*, the publick Concourſe, the High-way and Road of Vice, and you muſt go in the *Narrow Path*, tho' you have *little or no Company*.

Seventhly, Bleſs God, you that are in This Way; magnify his holy Name, that you have been directed by the Spirit of Grace to leave the *wide Path of Sin*, and to walk in the *Narrow* and Strait Way which leads to Life and Happineſs. Be throughly ſenſible of This great Favour vouchſafed to you. *It is not in man to direct his ſteps.* It was not in you to chooſe the right Way. It was above your Strength and Power to abandon the Way of Sin and Deſtruction. Therefore extol and advance the diſcriminating Grace of God; ſet forth the Praiſes of the moſt High, ſpeak good of his Name, and let the Remembrance of his ſingular Mercy to you be ever before you. Say with an humble Thankfulneſs, What am I, and what is my Father's Houſe, that I am thus peculiarly favour'd? What am I, that I ſhould partake of this Grace and Mercy which is denied to *others?* How *many* indulge their Luſts, and live in the Practice of notorious Sins, and are hardned in them, and obſtinately perſiſt in their wicked Courſes, and will not be reclaimed? How many Thouſands forſake the Way of Life, and plunge themſelves headlong into eternal Miſery? And yet I, by the Free Grace of God, am kept from thoſe *Sins*

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* *Non tam bene cum rebus humanis agitur, ut meliora pluribus placeant. Argumentum peſſimi Turba eſt.* Senec.

† Ταῖς λεωφόροις μὴ βαδίζειν.

and that *Deſtruction* which they run into. Oh the unſpeakable Goodneſs of God to me! Oh the infinite Mercy of Heaven! I will magnify this unparalleled Kindneſs as long as I have a Being! I will for ever bleſs the God of my Salvation.

Eighthly, You that have this ſingular Favour conferred upon you, you that have been directed into the Narrow Way which conducts you to Life and Happineſs, you that are ſo *eminently diſtinguiſhed* from others, you that are ſo *few* in Number, ſee that ye be *kindly* and *friendly* to one an other. You are but a *little Flock*, you are a poor *Remnant*, you are deſpiſed and hated by the World; let *this* remind you of loving one an other more. Why ſhould you fall out, ſeeing you are *Brethren*, you are intimately and nearly *related* to one an other, as being Members of the myſtical Body, the Church, of *Chriſt*. If you love him, you muſt needs bear an Affection to *one an other*. Remember the peculiar Mercy you are Joint-Sharers in, whilſt the *Generality* of the World are excluded from this Favour and Grace. *You* are but *few*, let not the World obſerve that you *diſagree*, that you entertain any *Enmity* and Bitterneſs in your Hearts. The Number is ſmall of thoſe that ſhall be ſaved: Oh let not *them* oppoſe and perſecute *one an other*. The *World* will not fail to do *that Work*; they will certainly hate and affront you: Be it far from *you* to do this amongſt *yourſelves*.

Ninthly, If ſo few are ſaved, then you who doubt whether you be of thoſe Few, *Examine* yourſelves: Search and try your State and Condition. *Many* are called: But *Few* are choſen. There are many in the Church, but few true Saints. Therefore ſuſpect yourſelves, be anxious and ſollicitous to know what you are. When Chriſt told his Diſciples that one of them ſhould prove ſo unworthy and wicked as to betray him, you may obſerve how *concerned* they were. *Is it I*, ſaid one; and *is it I*, ſaid an other. They preſently enquired *which* of them was *particularly* the Perſon that was to commit ſo vile a Sin. Thus muſt *you ſearch and try* yourſelves; examine ſeriouſly whether you be in the *Narrow* Way that leads to Life, or whether you are travelling in the *Broad* Way that leads to Deſtruction. Do you deny yourſelves, do you mortify your Luſts, do you reſiſt the Temptations of the evil Spirit, do you ſtrive againſt your carnal and corrupt Nature, do you ſtruggle and wreſtle with the Fleſh and the Luſts thereof? Do you maintain a continual Combat with Sin, and do you hate and abhor it? Are you *ſincere* and *upright* in what you do, altho' there be Infirmities and Imperfections attending your beſt Performances? By ſuch ſhort Demands as *theſe* put to yourſelves, you may in a great Meaſure aſcertain yourſelves concerning your Condition, and your *Examination* will prove *ſucceſsful and proſperous*.

Tenthly then, If there be but *few* that ſhall be ſaved, be ſure that you be of *that Number*. Since there is ſuch a great Shipwreck of Souls, be careful that *you* be none of thoſe that ſink into the Deep, even into the bottomleſs Pit of Hell. When a fatal Peſtilence enters into a City or Town, and begins to ſpread itſelf, and to infect the Neighbourhood, you may take Notice how *buſy* Men are at ſuch a Time in providing for their Safety, and in ſecuring themſelves from the ſpreading Contagion. Should you not be *much more* buſy and ſollicitous, when Sin, the worſt of Plagues, ſpreads itſelf far and near, and diſperſes its Contagion in all Places, and amongſt all Sorts of Perſons, and when ſo *many die* of it, and everlaſtingly periſh? Should you not be very careful to provide for your Safety and Security, to avoid the fatal Infection of Sin? Should you not labour to be of that *ſmall Number*, who ſhall not be deſtroyed by it? And how is *this* to be done? Take it in brief thus, Live the Life of thoſe few that ſhall be ſaved. Act, and walk, and behave yourſelves in all Things as thoſe that are the ſmall elect Number of true Chriſtian Believers. Let your Converſation be as becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt. If the *greateſt Numbers* of Men were ſaved, then indeed you needed not be ſo circumſpect and careful. But ſince *few* attain to that Happineſs, you ought to be very ſollicitous to be of *that Number*.

But perhaps you'll ſay, This which I ſo much urge, and ſo often repeat, is rather an *Impediment* to your entring in at the ſtrait Gate than any Help or Furtherance: For the *Paucity* of thoſe that are ſaved, and the *Difficulty* of attaining Heaven are great *Diſcouragements* to you; when you think of theſe Things, you are caſt down and diſmayed. Therefore in the laſt Place I conclude with this Exhortatory *Inference*, Let not the Doctrine of the Difficulty of being ſaved, and of the Fewneſs of thoſe that are ſaved diſcourage and deject you. Whatever I have ſaid on this Head, let not the Roughneſs and Unevenneſs of the Way make you unwilling to walk in it. Let not the Length and Tedioùſneſs of it cauſe you to ſtand ſtill or go back: But conſider with me theſe Five Things.

Firſt, Difficulty ſhould be ſo far from diſcouraging you, that it ought to *quicken* and *enliven* you. The ſeveral Particulars which I have offered to you, ſhould *excite* and *inflame* you; this is the *true Uſe* which you muſt make of what I have ſaid, *viz.* that thereby you ſhould be *encouraged* in your Duty, ſtirred up to greater Diligence and Watchfulneſs. Let it *not diſmay* you, that the Gate is ſtrait, and the Way is narrow, but *take Heart* from this very Conſideration. *Lot* was laughed at by his Sons, when he foretold the Deſtruction of *Sodom*, *Gen.* xix. 14. But that did not diſcourage him from doing his Duty, and that did not beget in him a Disbelief of what God had ſaid. Deriſion, Reproach, Diſappointments, and all Sorts of Difficulties do but add *Wings* to the Faithful; they hearten and enliven reſolute Souls. Our Chronicles tell us, that when *William*, afterwards ſirnamed the Conqueror, landed in *England*, he ſent his Ships away, or as others ſay, he ſet them on Fire, that his Men might not think of eſcaping, by returning back again, but that they might be inſpired with the greater *Courage*, and either *conquer or die*. The *Difficulties* we meet with in the Way to the Kingdom of Heaven, *i. e.* in vanquiſhing our Luſts, and getting the Victory over our ſpiritual Enemies, ſhould have a reſembling Effect upon us; we muſt *fight* or *die*: There is nothing to be done by Cowardiſe and Faintheartedneſs. Let therefore the Hardſhips *animate* us, and create in us Valour and Courage; let us be bold and reſolute, let us act ſtrenuouſly and vigorouſly, ſeeing we muſt unavoidably periſh, if we do not.

Secondly, Conſider that *Difficulty* is an Argument of the *great Excellency* and *Value* of the Things which we ſtrive for. Thoſe Things that are moſt *valuable* are *hardeſt* to come by. Excellent Things are *difficultly attained*. Learning, and Honour, and Riches, and Health are not purchaſed generally but by great Study, conſiderable Danger, huge Induſtry, and much Care. *Thus* it is with the Attainments of *this* World. And ſhall we think, that the Things of a *better* Life are to be acquired without Pains and Labour? Can you not have *earthly Things* without *Difficulty*, and do you imagine that Heaven will be purchaſed without it? No: Deceive not yourſelves. The more *excellent* the Quarry is, the more *hazardous and difficult* muſt your Purſuit and Chaſe be.

Thirdly, Conſider this alſo, that tho' the Way to Heaven be *narrow and difficult*, yet you have before you the *eminent Examples* of thoſe that have gone that Way; and *theſe* ought to be a *great Encouragement* to you. Methinks I hear the beloved Servants of God, the bleſſed Saints above, thus ſpeaking to us from the Battlements of Heaven, We have fought our good Fight, we have finiſhed our Courſe, and we are now in Poſſeſſion of that Kingdom, which we ſought after with ſo much Care and Diligence. We have paſſed ſafely thro' the Strait Gate, tho' we have found it no *eaſy Task* to do ſo. But the *Gates of Hell* were not able to prevail againſt us, whilſt we were entring in at *that*. We are now at our Journey's End, we ſit down in Peace, and enjoy an everlaſting Reſt; we are now ſeated in the Regions of Glory, and we call unto you that are *below* to make haſte to us; follow our Steps, and you will certainly arrive to the ſame Place of Bliſs. Now is your Time to *work and labour*, Let no *Difficulties* deter you. Make your Way thro' all Oppoſition; *Strive* to enter in at the ſtrait

Gate, and your Striving and Labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord, as we can by joyful Experience tell you.

Thus the *Examples* of the Saints ſhould encourage you, the Lives of thoſe holy Men are Strong Attractions to the Practice of Righteouſneſs and Piety. If the Narrative of *Alexander the Great*'s Exploits rouzed and ſtirred up the noble Spirit of *Cæſar*, how ſhould the Behaviour of thoſe admirable Worthies and Heroes influence on the excellent Temper of *Chriſtians*, and effectually move them to follow their Steps, and to conform their Lives to their Example. Let your Eyes then be fixed on thoſe great Inſtances of Vertue and Holineſs; ſet theſe Mirrors before you, and compoſe yourſelves by them. Bleſs God, that he not only points out to you the Way of Holineſs by his Precepts, but that he leads you to it, by the Patterns which he propounds to you. You may gather from what theſe holy Men did, that it is no impoſſible Thing to keep God's Commandments and to pleaſe him. Whoſoever ſaith God's Law's are too hard to be performed, is confuted by thoſe excellent Examples. Theſe may convince him, that the divine Precepts are not impracticable. Be encouraged then by what is ſet before you, and endeavour to imitate it.

When the Apoſtle had in the xi*th* Chapter of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* given Example of worthy Perſons who had by Faith atchieved mighty Things, he infers thence, that *we* ought thereby to be animated and ſtirred up to our Duty. "*Wherefore* (ſaith he in the Beginning of the enſuing Chapter) *Seeing we are compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes, let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us, and let us run with patience the race that is ſet before us.*" And then he adds in the next Verſe a *higher Example* than any of thoſe before-named, "*Looking unto Jeſus the author and finiſher of our faith, who for the joy that was ſet before him endured ſuch contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, leſt ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*" As much as if he had ſaid, The Example of Chriſt will keep you from being weary and fainting; it will marvellouſly quicken and chear you, and enable you to overlook all *Difficulties*. Set yourſelves to the Imitation of this, and then you will not complain of *Hardſhips* in Religion. For what is there, which you will not be able to arrive to, having ſuch an excellent Pattern before you?

Fourthly, Conſider likewiſe that God aſſiſteth thee, and then thou canſt not reaſonably object the *Difficulties* of Religion. If thou wert left to thyſelf, and hadſt no more Strength than thy *own*, then indeed there might be ſome Ground for *Complaint*. But ſeeing the *Almighty Arm* upholds thee, and the Help of *Jehovah* is not denied thee, thou haſt no Reaſon to be diſheartned. For *what Difficulty* can there be, where the Aid and Aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit are preſent? Then thy *Work* cannot be *too great*, and *thy Taſk* cannot be *too hard*. Let not the Weakneſs and Infirmity of thy Nature cauſe thee to deſpond, ſeeing God vouchſafes to help and ſupport thee; as it was moſt comfortably ſuggeſted to the Apoſtle in 2 *Cor*. xii. 9. *My grace is ſufficient for thee, for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs*, *i. e.* my Strength and Power do at ſuch a Time as *that* moſt eminently diſplay themſelves, and *then* they are known indeed to be *perfect and compleat*. Do *you* ſincerely and heartily ſet about your Duty, and be *induſtrious* and *vigilant*; and you ſhall not want the divine Aſſiſtance. Mark the Words of the Son of *Sirach*, "Come unto her (*i. e.* unto Wiſdom) as one that ploweth and ſoweth, and wait for her good Fruits: For thou ſhalt not toil much in labouring about her, but thou ſhalt eat of her Fruits right ſoon, *Wiſd*. vi. 19. Firſt there is *Plowing* and *Sowing*, and then *Reaping of Fruit*. After you have laboured a While, you ſhall find the Succeſs of it: For when God aſſiſts you, nothing can be inſuperable.

Fifthly, *Think of Heaven*, and then thou wilt eaſily digeſt all *Difficulties* whatſoever. Meditate on the future Reward, and that will mitigate all *Hardſhips* thou complaineſt of. Beſides that Holineſs itſelf hath all the Joy and Satiſfaction, all the Peace and Pleaſure which can poſſibly commend it to us, there are alſo eternal Joys in an other World, which are the Recompence of living holily in this Life. You ſhall be conducted to uninterrupted Peace and

Tranquillity in the Receptacles of bleſſed Saints and Angels. This may *encourage* you to diſcharge your Duty with all Faithfulneſs toward God and Man. Remember that it is your *Intereſt and Advantage* to be holy and religious, and to work out your Salvation. Conſider that your Happineſs to come depends upon your *preſent* Behaviour here. If you ſerve God entirely, he hath aſſured you that there is a Kingdom prepared for you, everlaſting Manſions in the higheſt Heavens ſhall be your Portion. Let then your *Thoughts* and *Affections* be placed on that exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory laid up for pious Souls. Think of the infinite Happineſs of the other World. Think how that after all your Hardſhips you ſhall be conveyed to a Place of Eaſe and Reſt. The *Strait Gate* which you here go through leads to the wide and ſpacious Gates of the *New Jeruſalem.* Tho' you have a narrow and difficult Way paſs thro' now, yet look to the End of it, which is unſpeakable Joy and Glory. Have an Eye to the Recompence of Reward: Set the future Joy before you, and then you will be enabled to endure all Croſſes and Hardſhips. Remember that you contend for a *Kingdom*, for a *Crown. That* will invigorate your Spirits; *that* will render all Things eaſy and welcome to you. Know this, that you muſt paſs thro' a *Wilderneſs:* But by that you ſhall arrive at *Canaan.* Conſider, that the *Sabbath*, the Time of *Reſt*, is after the Six-Days *Work.* Comfort yourſelves with this, that though the Way is *narrow* and *afflictive*, yet it will bring you to a *Palace*, to the glorious Habitation not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens.

The Caſe is this, Thou art bid to *work* and *labour* now, and thou ſhalt have thy *Wages* hereafter. Thou denieſt thy ſelf here, and thou ſhalt be abundantly made amends for it in Heaven. Thou refraineſt from ſinful Pleaſures, thou flieſt from Temptations, and watcheſt and prayeſt againſt them; thou abſtaineſt even from all Appearance of Evil, and delighteſt to do all the Good thou canſt; afterwards thou ſhalt receive thy Reward in the Regions of the Bleſſed. Now thou fighteſt the good Fight; hereafter thou ſhalt triumph. But it is not fit, that they ſhould ſhare in the Glory of the Victory, who never fought one Stroke. You ſee then how the Caſe ſtands: Your Reward in an *other* Life muſt encourage you to do your Duty in *this.* Tho' the Way be rugged and unpleaſant, yet you muſt conſider *whither it tends.* And this will take off the Roughneſs and Uneaſineſs of it; this will make your Journey pleaſant and delightful. Think often, that the more *difficult* the Way is, the End of it will be the ſweeter and pleaſanter. The *Haven* will be the more welcome after a Storm and Tempeſt. The Shade and Shelter will be the more grateful after you have been ſcorched with exceſſive Heat. The greater your *Labour* is, the *Reward* will be the more acceptable. Heaven will be *enhanſed*, and the Joy of it *increaſed* by the Sorrows and Hardſhips which you meet with in this Valley of Tears.

Think of theſe Things, take a daily Proſpect of your heavenly Manſions, be ever meditating upon and pondering this Weight of Glory. Whilſt you are at Work, you may be thinking of your Pay, and that will facilitate your Endeavours, and make you chearful and joyful. Have a Senſe of the unſeen and everlaſting Joys; Conſider the Greatneſs and Certainty of the Glory which ſhall be revealed. Strive, and wreſtle, and run as in a Race (they are apoſtolical Phraſes): And that you may ſo run that you may obtain, think ſeriouſly of the *Prize* that is ſet before you; lift up your Eyes to that Crown of Righteouſneſs reſerved in Heaven for you.

That Aphoriſm of the wiſe Man is well worth your obſerving in *Prov.* xv. 24. (a Place, which hath been interpreted diverſe Ways, according to the different Apprehenſions of Expoſitors, but give *me* leave to apply it to my preſent Purpoſe.) The Words are theſe, *The Way of Life is above to the Wiſe, to depart from hell beneath*; that is as much as to ſay, (according to my preſent Senſe of the Meaning of that Place,) The wiſe Man, who is the godly and righteous Perſon, keeps himſelf from the Ways of Wickedneſs, which lead to Hell and Deſtruction, by looking *upwards*, by ſeeing what is *above*, by having an Eye to *Heaven*, and the eternal *Rewards* there. This is the *true Way of Life*; by this Means he refrains from Sin, and diſcharges his Duty aright. Think of *Heaven*, and the Things *above*, and then you will depart from Hell below, you will renounce all diabolical and wicked Actions, you will live ſo here, that you may live eternally bleſſed hereafter. This I humbly offer as the genuine Meaning of thoſe Words. However if I fail in my Judgement as to *that*, the Matter itſelf which I am now urging upon you, is of the greateſt *Reality and Certainty*. If you would go on ſucceſsfully in the Way of Holineſs, conſider the happy End of it; bear in your Minds the ineffable Rewards of Righteous Souls, and you will find yourſelves wonderfully ſupported under all Difficulties.

Yea, let me adviſe you to meditate on all the principal Things which relate to a *future World*, as *Death* and *Judgment*, *Heaven* and *Hell*. The ſerious Thoughts of *theſe* will ſpoil all the Offers of Sin, and damp all unlawful Enterprizes and Undertakings. Think of the unmeaſurable Length of *Eternity*, into which you muſt enter by the Gate of *Death*: And how ſoon you ſhall make your *actual Entrance*, none of you can tell. Now you ſit here in your Pews, you look upon me, you liſten to me: But in a ſhort Time thoſe Eyes will be cloſed, thoſe Ears will be deaf, and ſhall never hear again in this World. Whether you think of it or no, Death is continually making his Approaches towards you, and 'tis impoſſible to avoid his fatal Stroke. This Tyrant needs not Fire, or Sword, or Peſtilence, to execute his Commands, (tho' they and many others of the like fatal Retinue, are at his Service;) for he *can* diſpatch us *without* their Aſſiſtance. He can inſinuate himſelf into our Ordinary Repaſt and Diet, and deprive us of Life by that which uſually repairs it. He doth too frequently make Mens Meats, but eſpecially their Drinks (when they are taken immoderately) inſtrumental to their Mortality. He can convey his Sting into our Joys, our Laughter, our Mirth, our Honours, our Pleaſures, and our greateſt Refections. He hath Deſigns upon us both in our greateſt Fatigue of Labour and Exerciſe, and alſo in our being idle and doing Nothing. He delights (as 'twere) to *ſurprize* unwary Mortals when they *leaſt think* of his Approach, and when they are unprepared for it. This common Foe keeps whole Armies of Diſeaſes in Pay, to fight againſt us. And oftentimes his *Ambuſcades* are more fatal than his *Onſets*: His Strokes are *moſt deadly* when they are *leaſt perceived* by us, as in Lethargies, Apoplexies and the like Diſtempers. How ghaſtly doth he look in a Fit of a Convulſion? How pale and trembling in an Ague? How fierce and inraged in a Fever, and how unwelcome in every Viſage, that he appears in? When he lays his cold and earthy Hands on you, how doth he ſully all your Beauty, how doth he disfigure your Countenances, looſe your Joints, and create a Confuſion and Diſorder as affrighting as himſelf? I beſeech you conſider of theſe Things.

And again, Think how ſtrict and ſevere the Accounts of *Doomſday* will be; how exact and impartial the laſt Judgment will prove. The ſevere Court of *Areopagus* (famous of old among the *Athenians*) was a mild and favourable one in Compariſon of what that will be. Oh that you would think of that impartial Judicature, that you would (with the devout St. *Jerom*) imagine always that you heard the laſt Trumpet ſound, and that this Voice is ever in your Ears, *Ariſe ye dead, and come to Judgment*. There is a Day coming when the voluptuous Perſon will curſe all his carnal Delights and Pleaſures, and the Drunkard his intemperate Cups; when the covetous Man will curſe his Eſtate and Wealth, and the ambitious Man his ill-gotten Honours and Preferments. There is a Day coming when the Wicked will heartily wiſh that they had minded the Concern of their immortal Souls, that they had attended to the Diſcourſes of the Preachers of the Goſpel, that they had faithfully made Uſe of the Means of Salvation, that they had ſpent their Time in religious Offices, that they had provided for Eternity: But alas all their Wiſhes will be vain. O think of that Day, and be ſerious in your Religion.

Meditate likewiſe on the *Torments of Hell*. Try whether your ſerious Thinking on thoſe exquiſite Flames will quench the Fire of Luſt: Thou ſayeſt that the Way to Heaven is ſtrait and difficult: But I beſeech thee think of the *extreme Miſery* of thoſe that miſs of it: And conſider of this, that many Millions are now in Hell for thoſe very Things which ſome of you are now contriving and acting; they are tormented in endleſs Flames for that which you have been doing all your Lives long: And therefore if you do not ſpeedily repent, you muſt be Fellow-Sufferers with them in thoſe Flames. But tho' the Fear of *Hell* be a lawful and juſtifiable Motive to a holy Life, yet with

Perſons of the beſt Tempers *Rewards* are more prevalent than Puniſhments. The enlivening Hopes of Heaven are the moſt proper and genuine Incentives to ingenuous and Chriſtian Spirits. I have ſet both of them before you, and now leave them with you. Tread in the Paths of Holineſs, and be not weary of well-doing, when ſo great Rewards are ſet on one Hand to invite you to your Duty, and ſo great Puniſhments on the other to deter you from the Neglect of it. Be always conſidering what your State will be *hereafter*. Look upwards to Heaven, and downwards to Hell. Have a Senſe of the Life to come, and ponder both the Recompence and the Penalty which attend it.

And thus (I hope) upon a ſerious Conſideration of theſe Particulars you will find that the *Difficulty* of being ſaved, and the *Fewneſs* of thoſe that are ſaved are no Arguments to *diſcourage, and to diſhearten* you, but rather that they ſhould *quicken and inflame you*, and effectually cauſe you to be extraordinary watchful and careful, to be *induſtrious and laborious*, and in a Word, to *ſtrive* to enter in at the ſtrait Gate. Which brings me to

The *Third* and *Laſt* Propoſition grounded on the Words, and that is this, Tho' the Gate be ſo ſtrait and the Way ſo narrow, yet it is our indiſpenſable Concern to *enter into* them, and in order to that to *ſtrive*. I have in ſome Meaſure, in my Inferences from the foregoing Propoſitions, anticipated what I am to ſay under this: But I ſhall now be more particular and large, and diſtinctly ſhew How it muſt be our *utmoſt Care and Endeavour* that we may be of the Number of thoſe that are ſaved. We muſt *ſtrive* to enter in at the Gate tho' it be *ſtrait*, and tho' *ſo few* go in thereat. Yea, we have the *greater Reaſon* to *ſtrive* becauſe of that *Difficulty* and *Paucity*. This is clear both from the Exhortation in the Front of my Text, *Enter ye in at the ſtrait gate*, whatever you do take Care of that: And this is yet more evident from the expreſs Words of St. *Luke*, [*Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate*]. This is a parallel Place with St. *Matthew*, and here you ſee there is *this Addition* [ſtrive] or *fight*, for ſo it is rendered in other Places of Scripture. It is a military Word, taken from Soldiers and Arms. Or it is a Word belonging to that particular Sort of Combatants among the *Grecians*, which were in their publick Exerciſes and Games. And to *theſe* there is frequent Alluſion in the *New Teſtament*: St. *Paul's* Epiſtles (as the Learned have obſerved) abound with Places which refer to thoſe agoniſtical Exerciſes and Combats. And here our *Saviour* makes Uſe of the Word which is commonly applied to them. *Strive* to enter, ſaith he; take as much *Pains and Labour* as thoſe that are wont to ſtrive for the Maſtery, that run or wreſtle for a Prize. Uſe your *utmoſt Strength* and *Skill*. Be very induſtrious and ſollicitous. *Labour for that meat which endureth to everlaſting life. Work out your ſalvation. Give all diligence* to be found acceptable to God. Know that the Life of a Chriſtian is a Life of *Work and Labour*, of indefatigable Care, Study and Induſtry. He ſpends himſelf in the Purſuit of Heaven, he never ceaſes labouring, fighting, ſtriving. I pray take Notice of this Maxim, Some are *converted* that never ſtrove for it, but none are *ſaved* but thoſe that ſtrive. St. *Paul*, who did nothing towards his Converſion, tells us, that he laboured more abundantly afterwards than all the Apoſtles. There is no Entring into the Gate of Life without Striving; therefore make it the Buſineſs of your whole Life to ſtrive that you may enter. And this *Striving* muſt have theſe Three Qualifications, *Firſt*, it muſt be *early*. *Secondly*, *earneſt*. *Thirdly*, *conſtant and perſevering*.

Firſt, I ſay, it muſt be early. [Seek ye *firſt* the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs,] ſaith our Saviour, *Matt.* vi. 33. We muſt make our Religion our firſt Care and Buſineſs. Go into the Narrow Way *ſpeedily*, enter into the Strait Gate *preſently*, before thou art old and decrepid, and canſt not be able to get through. Obſerve how wicked Men *make haſte* and *delay not* to follow their evil Ways, and to provoke God, and to act all Things unworthily and baſely. They croud *ſo faſt* into the Broad Way, that one would believe they thought there would not be Room enough to hold them unleſs they made Haſte. But in the Way of Life you move ſlowly, you rid no Ground, but you fondly hope that with your ſoft and eaſy Pace you ſhall arrive in good Time at Heaven and Happineſs. But be not miſtaken. This dull Pace will not reach

Heaven. If you expect to come thither, you muſt put on faſter, following the Example of holy *David*, *Pſal.* cix. 60. [I *made haſte* and *delayed not to keep thy commandments.*] You muſt, as that wiſe King and pathetick Preacher exhorts you, *Remember now your creator in the days of your youth.*

But a greater than *Solomon* is to be liſtned to, even our bleſſed Lord and Maſter who, when he had given this Charge, [*ſtrive* to enter in at the ſtrait Gate] immediately adjoins this Reaſon in the 24*th* Verſe of that forementioned Chapter, the xiii*th* of *Luke*, *For many (I ſay unto you) will ſeek to enter in, but ſhall not be able.* And how comes this to paſs? How is it, that theſe Seekers are ſucceſsleſs? What is the Reaſon that they labour to no Purpoſe? Our Saviour will aquaint you in the next Verſe, [When once the Maſter of the Houſe is riſen up, and hath ſhut the Door, and ye begin to ſtand without and knock, ſaying, Lord open to us, he ſhall anſwer and ſay unto them, I know you not whence you are, depart from me ye Workers of Iniquity.] If you defer your Seeking 'till the Door be ſhut, *i. e.* if you *put off* your Repentance and the Reforming of your Lives, 'till it be too late, you may be juſtly *excluded* from Mercy, you may be deſervedly rejected and refuſed.

Therefore betake yourſelves to this great Work *ſpeedily*: Set out betimes, that you may have Day-light to diſpatch your Journey, and that the Night approach not, and hinder you from performing it. Think of the Shortneſs of Life, the Uncertainty of your Reſidence here. Remember what a Troop of Diſeaſes and Maladies infeſt Mankind, and help to thruſt us out of the World. Innumerable Caſualties may ſurprize us, your Breath may be ſtopped in a Moment by any of them. Or ſuppoſe you eſcape theſe, and no ſtrange and unexpected Accidents bereave you of your Lives, and hurry you to your Graves; yet your Bodies are of that Make that they will fall of themſelves, and how ſoon that will be we have not the Skill to diſcover. However, your Time is ſhort at beſt, it is as brittle and frail as the Glaſs that ſometimes meaſures it. See how the Shadow ſteals away ſlily upon the Dial, and carries Time along with it: And if thy Time and Days be ſpent, and thou haſt not minded the Concerns of an other World, thy Caſe is very ſad and deſperate. It is not long before the luſtieſt and healthfulleſt of you muſt take up your Lodging under Ground. Think of it now, and be ſerious. I read of a great Commander, that fell a weeping when he took a Survey of his vaſt Army, and conſidered, that in a ſhort Time they ſhould all march off the World, and not one Man of them be alive. Certainly it is a Matter which we ought to be deeply affected with, that we muſt all leave the World in a few Years; it may be in a few Hours: And this ſhould make us ſollicitous to do ſome Good betimes, and not to truſt to To-morrow. It may be, thy Death will have no Sickneſs for its Fore-runner. Death may ſteal upon thee without giving thee any Warning. Thou mayeſt be on a ſudden ſeized upon, and have no Time allowed thee to think of Dying. How many do you hear of, that are ſuddenly ſnatched away? Conſider that this may be *your* Caſe, therefore do what you are to do *now*. Or if you ſurvive, and leiſurely depart out of this World, your Sickneſs and Languiſhments may unfit you for all ſerious Acts of Devotion and Repentance.

Therefore whilſt it is called To-day, exerciſe yourſelves about the great Employment, which you were ſent hither for, *viz.* to ſerve your Maker, and ſecure your own Happineſs. Behold! now is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation; and if you let this Seaſon ſlip, you may be for ever undone. This may be the laſt Opportunity for ought you know, of receiving Inſtructions for your Souls Health; therefore I beſeech you, attend to what I ſay, and be very ſpeedy in your Enterprizes for Eternity. Let your good Purpoſes and Intentions paſs into Act and Execution: For otherwiſe, if you be ſnatched away, thoſe Purpoſes will be of no Uſe to you. Indeed the Church of *Rome* perſuades its Followers, that there is ſomething to be done by them, when their Bodies are in the Grave: They thruſt a Purgatory on the Belief of ſilly Souls, to encreaſe their own Treaſures. But this muſt needs be an Impoſture, becauſe it is the downright Determination of the Book of God that [*There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge in the grave, whither we go.*] And for this very Reaſon we are concerned to *do whatſoever our hand findeth* *to do*, not only ſpeedily, but *with all our might*. Which brings me to the next Particular.

Secondly then, Your *Striving* muſt be *earneſt*. It muſt be with great *Intenſneſs, Vigour, and Zeal*. *The kingdom of heaven muſt ſuffer violence*; and *the violent take it by force*, as our Saviour ſpeaks in *Matt*. xi. 12. The Kingdom of Heaven is got by thoſe that *thruſt*: So the *Greek* properly is to be rendered. If you would enter in at the ſtrait Gate, you muſt thruſt and puſh forwards, you muſt make your Way with Violence and Force. It was the Reſolve of that famous *punick General* in his March over the *Alps* to find, or make Way. Our Endeavours for Happineſs ſhould be of a like Sort: If we cannot Effect our Work with Eaſe, we muſt decline no Labour, we muſt make our Paſſage through all Difficulties, we muſt employ all our Strength and Might to oppoſe the Enemies of our Salvation: And we muſt with the greateſt Fervency and Earneſtneſs imaginable encounter them. Is the Salvation of your Souls a hard Task, and do many miſcarry about it (as I have ſhewed); then labour in this Work with all your Might and Force. What a Shame is it to ſee the Remiſsneſs, that Men generally are guilty of? How faint and dull, how cold and phlegmatick are they in their Endeavours for an other World? But be it known to you, if you expect to be ſucceſsful, you muſt exert all the Powers of your Souls, ſet all your Faculties on work, be very intent and ſerious. But I ſhall have Occaſion to ſpeak further of this Particular before I leave this Subject, and therefore at preſent I will ſay no more, but paſs to the

Third Qualification of our *Striving*, namely, it muſt be conſtant and perſevering. Our Striving, as it muſt *begin betimes* (as you heard in the firſt Particular), ſo it muſt continue to the End. As it muſt be *earneſt* (according to what I ſuggeſted in the ſecond Particular), ſo it muſt be frequent and laſting. *Aſſiduity* muſt be joined to *Earneſtneſs and Fervency*. No Time is to be omitted and neglected, you muſt in Seaſon and out of Seaſon, Night and Day proſecute this great Deſign. It is ſaid, that if a Man hath once learned to *ſwim*, he can never forget it, or loſe it by long Diſuſe. I am ſure it is not ſo with any *moral and ſpiritual* Actions. They muſt be repeated and renewed by conſtant Exerciſe, or elſe they will fail. Wherefore the Apoſtle's Exhortation is ſeaſonable, 1 *Tim*. iv. 7. *Exerciſe thy ſelf unto godlineſs*, frequently uſe thy ſelf to the Practice of it. Live in a daily and conſtant Exertment of thy Graces: For this is of great Vertue and Power. Accuſtoming yourſelf to Religion and Piety will have a mighty Influence on you. * Medicines muſt not be often ſhifted and changed, if you expect any Good from them. It is as true of our ſpiritual Maladies; they will not be cured, if we do not uſe our ſelves conſtantly to the Remedies which are proper for them. But if we do, we ſhall ſoon ſee the good Effect of it: For repeated Acts of Vertue will procure Habits, and Habits will *facilitate* all you do. Then will be verified that of our Saviour, [To him that *hath* ſhall be given;] to him that *hath*, *i. e.* to the Perſon, who *conſtantly accuſtoms* himſelf to the Practice of Godlineſs, and ſo *makes Uſe* of what Talents are beſtowed upon him: For Aptneſs or Facility gained by Cuſtom is called by the *Greeks* ἕξις *a Having*, or *a Habit*, and ſo the Word is to be taken here; and there is a *Promiſe* annexed to this Habit. To him that hath *ſhall be given*; *i. e.* his Vertues and Graces ſhall be *encreaſed*. In the *frequent Exerciſe* of his Gifts and Graces he ſhall find them *improved*. Nothing is more evident than this, that the conſtant and periodical Returns of religious Duties and Performances are neceſſary to maintain and uphold Religion in you, to imprint the Senſe of Holineſs on your Minds, to enliven your Graces, and to compleat and conſummate them.

Be perſuaded therefore to *continue conſtant* in your Duty, *perſiſt* in the Way of Life and Salvation; be every Day adding to your Acquirements and Attainments. Set St. *Paul*'s heroick Example before your Eyes, *Phil*. iii. 13, 14. *I count not my ſelf to have apprehended, but forgetting thoſe things which are behind, I reach forth unto thoſe which are before. I preſs towards the mark for the*

* *Nihil æquè ſanitatem impedit, quàm remediorum crebra mutatio.* Sen. 2. Epiſt.

prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus. If you reſolve to imitate this holy Man, you muſt not think highly of the Progreſs which you have made already. Many have ſet out well, they have made a hopeful Beginning, they advanced fair at firſt, but then (alas!) they ſtopp'd and ſtood ſtill, thinking that they had gone far enough, and that it was not needful to go any further. When heretofore they thought the World's Period was *Hercules's Pillars*, it is no Wonder they improved not the Art of Navigation, and took no Care to venture beyond thoſe Boundaries. They ſtifled all Endeavours of that Kind with the Perſuaſion that they could go no further. He that imagines his own Horizon to be the Limits of the World, will not be perſuaded to be a great Traveller. So it is likewiſe in the Ways of Religion and Holineſs: You ſtifle all your pious Endeavours by Fixing your ſelves certain Limits and Boundaries: *Hitherto* you will come, and *no farther.* You have gone thus far, and here you reſolve to ſtand ſtill. But *this* is not the *Striving* which is required of you. You muſt continue in your Duty, and not be weary of Well-doing.

As you have ſeen what was the Apoſtle's own Practice, ſo obſerve what is his Exhortation to others in Reference to this Matter, *Lift up*, ſaith he, *the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees* (which begin to flag) *and make ſtreight paths for your feet, leſt that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed and ſtrengthened*, Heb. xii. 12, 13. In ſtead of Fainting, grow more ſtrong and lively. In ſtead of Walking lamely, uſe your Feet with all Nimbleneſs and Vigour. Let not a Conceit of your Proficiency in Religion check your future Induſtry, and ſtrangle your Endeavours for the Time to come. You have a long and difficult Journey, and therefore be provided with Patience and Contentment, be *ſhod with the preparation of the goſpel of peace*, endure all Hardſhips with quiet and ſubmiſſive Spirits, be indefatigable in the Ways of Holineſs. Do not faintly give over your Purſuit, daily renew your Reſolves, remembring our Saviour's Words, *No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.* Luk. ix. 62. All that you *have done* ſignifies nothing, unleſs you hold out to the End. Let not the Ship ſink in Sight of the Haven: Do not drop into Hell in the very Confines of Happineſs. As you have begun, and made ſome Progreſs in the Narrow Way which leads to Life, ſo proceed yet further, and maſter all Difficulties, and reckon no Pains too much for Heaven. Thus you ſee *how* you muſt *ſtrive* to enter in at the Strait Gate.

But here an *Objection* will aſſault us. It is true, ſome will ſay, *Chriſt* found the Way to Glory a narrow and a ſtrait Way; he ſuffer'd all Sorts of Hardſhips, and even waded through Blood to the Fruition of the heavenly Kingdom: But ſurely the Caſe is not the ſame with *us*: For what he did, he did for our Sakes, and that we might be excuſed from doing thoſe Things. He fulfilled the Law in the Strictneſs of it, but no ſuch Thing is required or expected of us. He underwent the greateſt Sufferings, that we might be exempted from them. How then can the Way be ſo *hard* as you talk of? We had one to obey and to ſatisfy for us, and therefore nothing is to be done by us. However, tho' we ſhould do never ſo much, yet we can't be ſaved for our Works: Nay, ſince Chriſt hath died for us, his Death will avail for our Salvation, whether we do any Thing or no.

This is a bold and daring Objection, and the Mouth of it muſt be ſtopp'd, and the rather becauſe it is grown ſo frequent among ſome Perſons. I anſwer then briefly, That Chriſt came not to give a Diſpenſation to Sin, or to excuſe us from our Duty. His Obedience doth not ſet us free from walking righteouſly and holily, and from performing thoſe Conditions which are required of us. *Take my yoke upon you*, ſaith Chriſt; you muſt bear his Yoke then: That is your indiſpenſable Duty. He doth not exempt you from taking his Yoke upon you, but he will make it *eaſy*, by giving you Strength to bear it. You muſt work and labour, but he will *enable* you to perform your Task. *We are his workmanſhip*, (ſaith the Apoſtle, *Eph.* ii. 10.) *created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God hath before ordain'd, that we ſhould walk in them.* And this is the Tenour of the Chriſtian Inſtitution, that Men ſhould *live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godlily, in this preſent world*, that they ſhould ſubdue their Luſts, mortify their corrupt Affections, ſtruggle with their depraved

Natures, watch over their Hearts, correct their Lives, and be diligent and induſtrious in pleaſing God and obeying his Laws. We are to know this, that Chriſt came not only to ſuffer and die for us, but to inſtruct us in our Duty, and to ſet us an Example of Holineſs. Tho' Chriſt hath done ſo much, we are not excuſed from doing ſomething, I do not mean ſomething that can ſatisfy God's Juſtice, not ſomething that is meritorious, but we are enjoin'd to do ſomething, yea to do many Things, and thoſe very hard and difficult Things, to ſhew our Thankfulneſs to God, to manifeſt our inward Sincerity, to edify others, to fit and prepare our ſelves for the Place of perfect and compleat Holineſs hereafter. In ſhort, tho' our Works have nothing of Merit in them, yet we are to remember, that they are requiſite in order to Salvation: For *without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord.*

Thus having anſwer'd the Objection, I will now offer to you Two weighty *Conſiderations*, which you muſt always have before you, and by the Influence of them you'll be moved to *ſtrive*, and that with great Zeal, altho' the greateſt *Difficulties* lie in your Way. The Conſiderations are theſe: *1ſt*, Take Notice how Men ſtrive for the *World*. *2dly*, Obſerve how they ſtrive and take Pains in the Purſuit of *Sin*.

Firſt, I ſay, conſider how Men ſtrive and contend, work and take Pains, ſweat and toil, to purchaſe the Riches, Delights, and Honours of the *World*. And ſhall *they* be ſo ſollicitous and laborious for their worldly and ſecular Advantage? And wilt not *Thou* ſtrive and labour for the true Riches, durable Pleaſures, and heavenly Honours? You muſt make *their* Practice your Example and Pattern, *i. e.* you muſt ſtrive as much for Heaven as they do for Earth. The wiſe Man tells you in *Prov.* ii. 4. (ſpeaking there of Wiſdom) that *if you ſeek for her as ſilver, and ſearch for her as for hid treaſures*, you ſhall aſſuredly find her, you ſhall undoubtedly obtain her. Mark it, you muſt follow the Example of *covetous* and *worldly-minded* Men. Some of you perhaps may like to hear that well enough, but underſtand it in a right Meaning; that is, you muſt not come behind them in their Eagerneſs and Diligence. You are to be as forward and earneſt in Purſuit of Wiſdom, as they are in Seeking after Silver, and Searching for Mines, and hid Treaſures in them, whereby they may mightily enrich themſelves. Tho' you are to fly Covetouſneſs, yet in this you may, you muſt imitate the Covetous, *viz.* in their Care and Diligence.

You may bluſh indeed to think that you have Need of ſuch Teachers and Tutors. But know this, that of the worſt Perſons you may learn ſome Good, you may make Men's Vices ſubſervient to Vertue; you may make a pious Uſe of their impious Actions. Our Saviour ſends us to the crafty Serpents to learn true Wiſdom. *Be ye wiſe*, ſaith he, *as ſerpents.* Mat. x. 16. He ſends us to the waſtful and *unjuſt Steward*, to learn Providence in Preparing our ſelves for the Great Day of Accompts, *Luk.* xvi. 8. And here we are ſent by *Solomon* to the covetous Miſers, to learn from their Diligence in purſuing the Riches of this World, to ſeek with all Carefulneſs and Concernedneſs the Treaſures of a better and an other World; and particularly to take Care to be Poſſeſſors of that Knowledge and Wiſdom which will make us eternally happy. And we are aſſured, that if we be earneſt in our Endeavours, we ſhall certainly be put in Poſſeſſion of that matchleſs Treaſure. Be encouraged then to lay aſide Sloth and Idleneſs, and vigorouſly to purſue a Buſineſs which is of ſo great Moment. Remember, that you muſt ſeek for Grace and Holineſs and true Wiſdom, as you ſeek *for Silver*; your Endeavours after Righteouſneſs and Godlineſs muſt be *vigorous and active* as thoſe of the Men of the World are, when they are in Purſuit of Wealth and Riches. They tire themſelves, they exhauſt their Strength, they exerciſe all their Art and Cunning to be Gainers in the World. *Honours* and *Profits* are in their Eye, and they will reach at them, and approach to them, and be in Poſſeſſion of them, if it be poſſible. They will venture any Hazards, rather than they will be kept from them.

And the *Pleaſures of the World* are no leſs charming. They will ſhew the *greateſt Diligence and Induſtry* in Purchaſing the Delights and ſenſual Entertainments which are ſet before them. *Socrates*, in his * Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, tells us of a devout Man, who ſeeing a light Woman very artfully deck'd and trimm'd up for the Stage, fell a Weeping; and being ask'd why he did ſo, he replied, "This is the Reaſon, becauſe I am conſcious to my "ſelf, that I ſtudy not ſo much to pleaſe my God, as this Woman doth to "pleaſe lewd Men. This Strumpet takes more Care to gratify vile Sinners, "than I do to gain the Favour of the moſt High". This is a very uſeful Conſideration, and I wiſh it may ſink deep into your Minds, and cauſe you to mourn and lament, that worldly Men and Women are exceeding buſy and induſtrious about the Accompliſhing of their carnal Deſires and Appetites, and yet *you* are dull and unactive in your Proſecutions of ſpiritual and divine Things. How early and how paſſionately do *they* ſeek for Gain, Honour, and Pleaſure? And how coldly and indifferently do *you* mind the Affairs of an other Life.

And yet *they* ſtrive for *Uncertainties*, and they buſy themſelves about inconſiderable Matters. † They dive deep, but bring up Shells, according to the *Rabbinical* Proverb; they take great Pains, but uſually the Event is trifling and childiſh. He that ſeeks for Silver, and projects for an Eſtate, is not ſure he ſhall catch it: Or ſay that he doth, he is not certain he ſhall keep it. For *Solomon* hath told us, That *riches make themſelves wings, and fly away like an eagle towards heaven.* They are *winged* Creatures, in their own Nature they are fickle, and ready to fly away. If you labour to pinion them down, or to clip their Wings, that they may ſtay with you, then they can *make* themſelves Wings, and they are gone, and there is no Stopping of their Flight. If God gives the Word, they fly away *like an Eagle*, the ſwifteſt of all Fowls; ſuddenly and in a Moment is a great Fortune (as they call it) daſh'd in Pieces. And 'tis added, they fly *towards heaven*, *i. e.* far out of Sight; the Owners are never like to ſee them again. Theſe are the Things which men make ſuch a Stir and Buſtle about: And they reckon their Pains and Labour very well ſpent, and no Man ſhall perſuade them to the contrary. Tho' they know before-hand, that they ſhall meet with great Difficulties both in the *Acquiſition* and in the *Poſſeſſion* of theſe Things, (for they are hard to get, and they are eaſily loſt,) yet the Hardſhips which attend the Acquiring and Keeping of them, are ſo far from Slacking their Diligence, that they rather make them double it. They ſtand ready with open Arms to imbrace all Difficulties which they are to encounter with.

And ſhall not *Religion and Heaven*, and our eternal Concerns beget *as great* Diligence in us? Yea, ſhall not the buſy Contrivances, Cares and conſtant Endeavours of Worldlings, excite and quicken *you* to an eager Search after true Wiſdom, and an unwearied Care for your immortal Souls? Why do not you take Pains for your Salvation? Why do not you ſtrive as earneſtly for an *other World*, as the covetous and voluptuous and ambitious Perſons do for *this*? It is certain, that *you* have more *Reaſons* to ſtrive than *they*. I can aſſure you of this; for the ſpiritual Riches, Honours and Pleaſures, are ſuch as ye ſhall undoubtedly gain, if ye ſtrive for them: But we cannot ſay ſo of the others. Wiſdom is found of all its ſincere Seekers: None of her true Votaries ſhall miſcarry. Beſides, it is a fix'd and laſting Treaſure: No Violences, and Injuries, no Caſualties and croſs Accidents can rob us of it: It is that good Part, which cannot be taken away. Shall we not then act as vigorouſly, ſeek as carefully, labour as induſtriouſly for This, as we are content to do for the periſhing Things of this World? We have Reaſon, abundant Reaſon to lament our Folly as to this Particular. How abſurdly and ſottiſhly do we act? We are ſlow and dull in our Purſuits after the great Things of an other Life; but we are quick and buſy in Proſecuting the petty and trifling Things of This. We can ſcarcely ſpare any Time for the Former, but we think all our Life too little for the Latter.

I beſeech you, think of this ſeriouſly, and bluſh at your own Behaviour, and that of the Generality of Mankind. Shall Pleaſure and Dalliance, ſhall Wealth and Poſſeſſions, ſhall Vain-glory and Applauſe, put Men upon ſuch ſtrange and difficult Actions, as we ſee they undertake; and ſhall not the Love of

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* *Lib.* 4. *c.* 18.

† *In profundum deſcenderunt, & manu ſuâ eduxerunt teſtam.*

Vertue, and the ardent Affection we bear to God and his Laws, make us diſpenſe with as great Hardſhips, and thruſt us upon Actions equally difficult? O that the forward Zeal of Men in other Matters might inflame our Minds with a Reſolution to be as active in the Concerns of Religion! If you could arrive to this, it is impoſſible you ſhould miſs of Happineſs. Be as concern'd for Piety as you are for the Things of the World, and you cannot miſcarry. For you may take this for a certain Truth, that God requires of you no greater Diligence for the Working out of your Salvation, than that which you and others daily beſtow upon worldly Affairs and ſecular Buſineſs. God offers to you Heaven and Happineſs, upon the ſame Conditions which you are well contented to yield to in the Affairs of this Life, *i. e.* Striving and Labouring. Excellently to this Purpoſe the pious St. *Auguſtine*, "* Even in the Accounts of Heaven, ſaith he, That Man "ſhall be reckon'd to have done enough, who doth as much "for God, as he doth for the World." You cannot but ſay, that this is very eaſy and fair, very rational and equitable. No Man ſurely can think this to be hard Dealing.

* *Satis reputatur quis facere, quandò tantum facit pro Deo, quantum pro mundo facit.*

Nay, I will come lower yet, tho' you fall ſhort of that Labour and Pains which you take for the World, yet even that will ſuffice (on your Part) for the Attaining of Salvation and Bleſſedneſs. Let me tell you, if you will beſtow but half as much Diligence and Care about your Duty here, and your Happineſs hereafter, as you beſtow on the Things of this World, this will be ſufficient, you will aſſuredly enter into the Kingdom of God. It is enough, I ſay, if you be but half as careful about Heaven, as buſy Men commonly are about the Concerns of the World: For they are *too ſollicitous* about theſe, they are exceſſive and immoderate in their Proſecution of earthly Deſigns. If therefore Men would lay out *ſome Part* of this Care and Carking, this Labour and Induſtry upon the Things of Heaven and a better Life, they would find, that this would be accepted of God, and would be available to the Welfare of their Souls.

It was, I remember, the Saying of Cardinal *Wolſey*, that Great and Rich Prelate, when he grew out of Favour, and was ſent for, and ſeiz'd in the King's Name, "Had I ſerved God, ſaid he, as truly and carefully as I have "ſerved my Maſter, my Sovereign, he would not have forſaken me as This "doth." This will be a ſad and forlorn Reflection to any of you, that you took more Pains to pleaſe Man than God; to purchaſe the Favour of ſome Great One, rather than His whoſe Favour is better than Life. It will be grievous to remember that you toil'd and labour'd, and diſturb'd your Reſt, and incurr'd innumerable Hazards to become wealthy and gain an Eſtate in the World, and yet that you were unconcerned in the Buſineſs of your immortal Souls, that you never took any Pains, or loſt an Hour's Sleep about it. This will be a killing Reflection to you, when you come to die. Be perſuaded, therefore, to prevent it by your ſpeedy Care and Endeavours, by employing your chief Time and Labour in working out your Salvation. Think how reaſonable this is, that God requires of you no greater Pains in order to the Saving of your Souls, than you moſt frankly ſubmit to for the Purchaſing of worldly Goods. So much for the *Firſt Conſideration*, which I propounded to you.

Now I will paſs to the *Second*, which is This: Conſider how Men ſtrive and take Pains in the Purſuit of *Sin* and *Wickedneſs*, and in the Ways of Hell and Deſtruction; and let this excite you to be as laborious and diligent in the Purſuit of Goodneſs and Bleſſedneſs. It is true, whilſt Men hunt after the *World* (which I diſcours'd of under the former Head) they frequently carry on *ſinful* Deſigns: But now I am to ſpeak of the more direct Proſecution and Commiſſion of Sin and Vice, and to deſire you to conſider what Anxieties and Troubles, what Diſappointments and Incumbrances, what Pains and Tortures accompany them. The Kingdom of Darkneſs (as well as the Kingdom of Heaven) ſuffers Violence, and the Violent take it by Force. Men ſweat and toil to purchaſe Damnation. Let *This* make you aſhamed, when you are apt to complain of the *Strait Gate*. Remember, that Vice as well as Vertue hath its Hardſhips, yea it hath many more. To gratify a vain Luſt, how ſtrangely ſometimes do Men deprive themſelves of all their Eaſe and Peace, all their Reſt and Quiet, and plunge themſelves into unſpeakable Sorrows, Diſturbances, and Diſtractions? Quit not then the Way of Holineſs, becauſe of *ſome Difficulties* which you meet with in it; but conſider that there are *more Difficulties* that attend a ſinful Life. The Narrow Way is more eaſy than the Broad one. When thou art once uſed to it, thou wilt find it to be ſuch. But Wickedneſs, at one Time or an other, proves intricate and perplexed, vexatious and troubleſome, uneaſy and unquiet. It's uſual Companions are Regret and Remorſe, Pain and Anguiſh, Diſcontent and Diſſatiſfaction, a wounded Conſcience, Fear of Hell, Horror and Trembling, Shame and Bluſhing, Diſorder and Confuſion. Theſe are generally experienc'd in the Commiſſion of Sin, of ſome Sins eſpecially. Wicked Actions are every Way troubleſome; and it is *Folly and Madneſs* in Sinners to court their Danger and Diſtreſs, to ſue for Pain and Vexation, and to ſeem to be in Love with Difficulties and Hazards.

I beſeech you then remember that Sin is *laborious and toilſome*. It's mere Slavery to ſerve the Devil. *Wickedneſs* and *Hardſhips* go Hand in Hand. You read in the Parable of the Nobleman who went a long Journey, that one of his Servants, who was entruſted with a Talent, *digged in the earth and buried it*. He took Pains to hide, but would not to improve it. Which may repreſent this Truth to us, that many are content to work and labour, and to put themſelves upon Difficulties to offend God, and act contrary to their Duty. They *dig*, they delve, they labour, they toil to diſpleaſe their Maker, and to break his Laws. Some dig even their own Graves, procure Diſeaſes and Death by the wilful perſiſting in their evil Courſes. There are great Numbers of Sinners in the World, who experimentally find, that Sin is very vexatious, pernicious and tormenting. Some Sinners tugg all their Days in the Gallies, they make themſelves Slaves and Vaſſals to their Luſts. They *take Pains* to deſtroy their Souls, they undergo any Drudgery to make themſelves ſure of Hell and everlaſting Burnings.

Are theſe Things true, (as moſt certain they are,) then why do you complain of *Hazards and Hardſhips* in the Way of *Holineſs?* There is *no ſuch Thing*, if it be compared with the Toils and Hazards, the Torments and Troubles, which go along with a lewd and debauch'd Life. Allay then all your irkſome and mutinous Thoughts: Think often of this, and convince your ſelves of it as of an experimented Truth, that Vice is more laborious and painful than Vertue can ever prove to any Man. There is more Trouble and Regret, more Reluctancy and Difficulty in Acting wickedly, than the auſtereſt Perſon ever found in thoſe ſo much dreaded Works of Self-denial and Mortification. And do wicked Men thus toil and labour in the Way of Sin and Hell, and will not *you* be perſuaded to take Pains in the Way of Holineſs and Happineſs? Will you not be content to exert all your Power and Forces, will you refuſe any Work or Task, which is in order to your Entring into Life and Bleſſedneſs? I hope you will not; and to that Purpoſe I have propounded Theſe foregoing Conſiderations, which I deſire you to entertain and welcome in your Hearts, and I doubt not but you will be prevail'd with to be very diligent and induſtrious, and to *ſtrive* to enter in at the *Gate of Life*, be it never ſo *ſtrait*, be it never ſo *difficult*.

And now, in the *Laſt* Place, I have ſeveral plain and practical *Directions* to offer to you, by the Help of which, your *Striving* to enter in at the Strait Gate will certainly be effectual and ſucceſsful. The *Firſt* Help is earneſt Prayer; the *Second* is Serioufneſs, and being in good Earneſt; the *Third* is to reſiſt the firſt Beginnings of Sin; the *Fourth* is to make a Conſcience of the leaſt Sin; the *Fifth*, to avoid the Appearance of Evil; the *Sixth*, to be always fearful.

Firſt, Strive not in your own Power and Strength, but earneſtly *pray* to God, to make your Striving effectual and proſperous. All the following Helps, which I ſhall mention, will be ineffectual and inſignificant without the Divine

Grace influencing upon us; they will prove weak without This. Therefore with bended Knees, and a Heart more humble and proſtrate implore the Aid of the Almighty: Beſeech Him that he would direct you to find the Narrow Way: Make your Addreſſes to Him in the Pſalmiſt's Language, * *Shew me thy ways, O Lord, and teach me thy paths; lead me in thy truth, and teach me.* By earneſt and fervent Prayer, deſire the God of all Grace, from whom every good and perfect Gift cometh, to beſtow his Spirit upon you, whereby your Underſtandings may be enlightned, and your Wills and Affections renewed and ſanctified. Crave the Aſſiſtance of Heaven in your Combats with Sin and Satan, that you may overcome all Difficulties, and conquer all Temptations. Beg of Him, who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you can aſk or think, that he would transform your Hearts, and purge your Conſciences from dead Works, to ſerve the living God; that he would put his Laws into your inward Parts, and write them in your Hearts, that you may entirely love and obey his Commandments, and ſerve him acceptably with Reverence and godly Fear. Humbly make your Petition to your heavenly Father to uphold and ſupport you in the Way of Life, to chear and refreſh you amidſt the Hardſhips you meet with, and to enable you to perſevere in Holineſs to your Lives End. Thus be unwearied in your Addreſſes at the Throne of Grace. This is the firſt Help which I commend to you, *viz.* fervent and devout Prayer, ardent Supplication for God's Aſſiſtance. Enter into the Strait Gate upon your Knees. That is the beſt Poſture you can uſe.

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The *Third Perſon* likewiſe in the ever-bleſſed Trinity, is ſeriouſly employ'd for our Welfare. For this End and Purpoſe was he ſent to enlighten Men's Souls, to inſpire their Minds, and to influence on their Lives. He inwardly wreſtles and ſtrives with them, that he may turn them unto the Lord, and that Iniquity may not be their Ruin, but that he may ſave their Souls from going down to the Pit of Deſtruction. If he did not really deſign our Good, it could never be reconcil'd to Senſe, that he is ſaid to be *grieved* by our Sins, and therefore we are particularly charg'd *not to grieve the Holy Spirit*. If he were not in good Earneſt, he would not (as he often doth) accompany the Miniſtry of the Word, and thereby bring Men to a Sight of their Sins, and ſoften and melt their obdurate Hearts; he would not afterwards put holy Purpoſes and Reſolutions into them, and reform their Lives and Manners, and ſanctify them throughout in Body, Soul, and Spirit.

Thus God the *Father* is ſerious in all his Tenders of Salvation, God the *Son* is ſerious in the Redeeming of Souls, and God the *Holy Ghoſt* in Sanctifying them. If then the glorious Perſons of the ever-bleſſed Trinity be ſo ſollicitous for our Happineſs, is there not all the Reaſon imaginable, that we ſhould be concern'd for it? If *they* thus employ themſelves in providing Means and Helps for our Salvation, ſhall not *we* mind it our ſelves? I might add too, that the great Enemy of our Souls is ſerious in his Endeavours to deſtroy them for ever: We are told, That this roaring Lyon *goes about ſeeking whom he may devour*. Both [‡] thoſe Terms ſignify his Fierceneſs and Intenſeneſs in the

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† *Acts* xxi. 40.

‡ περιπατῶν ζητῶν.

Laſtly, we are converſant about the *greateſt Truths and Realities* in the World, about Matters of the higheſt Nature and Importance; and if we cannot afford to be *ſerious* here, there may be an utter Deſpair, that we ever ſhall be. You hear, indeed, the wiſe Man ſpeaking after this Rate, "Rejoice O "young man in thy youth, and let thy heart chear thee in the days of thy "youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the ſight of thine eyes," *Eccl.* xi. 9. There ſeems to be *little Seriouſneſs*, you will ſay, in This Kind of Language. The young Man is permitted to be frolick, and indulge himſelf in Mirth and Jollity. But you muſt know, that theſe Words are ſpoken ironically and ſarcaſtically, *i. e.* (in plain Terms) by Way of Deriſion and Scoffing. And truly *this Way* of Speech is fitted to the Guiſe of young Gallants and debauch'd Wits, who are given to *Scoffing and Jeering. Solomon* ſpeaks to them in their own Dialect; Rejoice in your blooming Days, be merry and jocund, live as you liſt, and do as you pleaſe: Take a Taſte of all Delights, yea glut your ſelves with ſenſual Pleaſures and Delicacies.

But conſult the next Words in that Verſe, and there you will find, that *Solomon* is *ſerious, very ſerious, Know thou, that for all theſe things God will bring thee into Judgment.* Here is no Drolling, but downright Truth. Here the wiſe Man is ſerious *himſelf*, and he ſpeaks ſuch Words as will beget Seriouſneſs *in others.* Know this, that God will call you to an Accompt for all your Actions: Doomſday will be very *ſevere*, therefore be ſo with your ſelves Now. Set about the great Work of your Salvation with all *Seriouſneſs. Play not* with eternal Fire: Dally not with everlaſting Burnings. *Jeſt* not with Heaven and an other World. Religion is the weightieſt Employment of our Lives, and therefore calls for the greateſt Solidity and Gravity. Think not, that you trade in Fiction and Poetry, when you read the Bible. Or becauſe you are jocoſe and merry your ſelves, do not believe, that Heaven is not ſerious with you. Whatſoever Station God hath placed you in, whether as Magiſtrates or Miniſters, Parents or Maſters, Subjects, Children, and Servants, whether in a higher or a lower Capacity, remember this, that you muſt be *concerned* and *ſerious. Mind* the proper Buſineſs, which is required of you: Be *intent* on your Duty: For our Religion requires the greateſt Intenſion and Seriouſneſs of Mind.

I will only quote Two notable Paſſages to this Purpoſe, which I have met with in the Lives of Two eminent Perſons, and then I will conclude this Head of my Diſcourſe. Even the greateſt Stateſmen and Politicians, who are verſ'd ſo much in the Affairs of *this* World, yet are ſenſible, that Religion is the greateſt Reality, and that they ought to be *very ſerious* in their Concerns for it. Of this Perſuaſion was that eminent Perſon Secretary *Walſingham*, in Queen *Elizabeth*'s Reign. Towards the latter End of his Days, (when he was beſt able to judge of Things,) he wrote Thus to the Lord Treaſurer *Burleigh*, an other Great Stateſman; (they are Words very well worth your remarking,) "We have, ſaith he, lived enough to our Country, our Fortunes, "our Sovereign; it is high Time we begin to live to our ſelves, and to our "God." And when ſome Courtiers tried to divert theſe ſerious Thoughts and Deſigns, by being jocular with him, he ſpoke thus to them, "Ah! "while *we* laugh, all Things are ſerious round about us: God is ſerious, "when he preſerveth us, and is patient towards us; Chriſt is ſerious when "he dieth for us; the Holy Ghoſt is ſerious when he ſtriveth with us. The "whole Creation is ſerious in ſerving God and us. They are ſerious in Hell "and Heaven; and ſhall a Man that hath one Foot in his Grave, jeſt and "laugh?" This was the Senſe of that Great Man.

And with him concurred that *other* renowned Stateſman and Student, whoſe *very Name* ſpeaks him *Great*, the excellent *Hugo Grotius*, that famous Scholar and Writer; when one came and asked him, a little before his Death, what Courſe he ſhould take to be religious, his brief Anſwer was this only, *Sir be ſerious.* That, he thought, was *ſufficient* to reply to his Demand: For if a Man will once grow *ſerious*, he is in the direct and ready Way to true Piety and Religion. I look upon *this* as the chief Step to all Vertue and Godlineſs;

lineſs: And if we be defective here, our farther Attempts will be very mean and inconſiderable.

And this I ſpeak the rather, becauſe we live in an Age that is very light and airy. You ſhall ſeldom hear Men in Company talk of Religion; and when they do, they ſpeak very ſlightly and ſcoffingly of it: It is uſual to make a Jeſt of Scripture, and to play upon the moſt ſacred Matters of it. And doth this become Chriſtian Men, and ſuch who expect to be ſaved hereafter? No, it rather ſhews, that they have no Senſe of Religion, or of their future Happineſs. I beſeech you be not of the Number of theſe Perſons; (tho' now 'tis grown ſo modiſh and genteel a Practice amongſt us:) comply not with ſuch ill Companions; abhor this light and ſcoffing Spirit; of all Things be careful not to jeſt with what is holy and reverend.

To ſhut up all, you may receive it as an undoubted Maxim, That ſo long as a Man is of a trifling and vain Spirit, he will never be able to effect any Thing in Religion. But (as *Solomon* well obſerves) * *by the ſadneſs of the countenance the heart is made better*, *i. e.* by Gravity and Seriouſneſs a Man's Mind is fitted for all Vertue and Goodneſs. Therefore my Advice is, Be manly and ſevere; do not trifle, as you hope for Life and Happineſs. Say and do nothing lightly in Religion; but be perſuaded to be *ſtayed and compoſed*. In a Word, betake yourſelves *in good earneſt* to that weighty Buſineſs, on which your eternal Bliſs depends.

Thirdly, In this ſpiritual *Striving* it is requiſite that you reſiſt the *firſt Beginnings* of Sin, the firſt Inſinuations and Offers of Vice. It is *Plutarch*'s Rule concerning the preſerving of Health, * "Have a great "Care to obſerve the Forerunners of Sickneſs, take Notice of "the certain Signs and Harbingers of Diſeaſes." Thus muſt we do in the ſpiritual Medicks: If we would effectually keep ourſelves from the Maladies and Diſeaſes of the Soul, which are Sin and Vice, we muſt have a watchful Eye to the firſt Eſſays and Beginnings of them. Our Care muſt be that we dally not with theſe; that we by no Means indulge them, leſt they encreaſe and grow upon us. * When *Plato* once checked a young Man for playing at Dice, the Youngſter excuſed himſelf by ſaying, It is a ſmall Thing to throw a Dy. But the Philoſopher replied upon him thus, Tho' it be a ſmall Thing to do ſo, yet it is no ſmall one to uſe yourſelf to it, to make a Habit of it. The ſame may be ſaid of Vice; As little and contemptible as it may ſeem to be, yet it is no inconſiderable Thing to uſe yourſelves to it. For hereby you will confirm yourſelves in your Sins; the Stain will ſink ſo deep, that you will not be able to waſh it out.

Therefore accuſtom not yourſelves to any evil Thing, curb Sin before it come to a Habit. Take the *children af Babylon and daſh them againſt the ſtones*, cruſh the Cockatrice in the Eggs. Remember this, that Sin is more eaſily kept out than it is afterwards ejected. It is better not to let the Diſeaſe get Root, than to pluck it up when it is rooted; nay perhaps it will be impoſſible for you to do this. When the Leproſy of Sin is not ſtopped, but ſuffered to ſpread itſelf over the whole Man, the Sinner is then ſo cruſted and hardned, that he becomes void of Senſe. The Cuſtom of Sinning takes away from him all Feeling, which is a very deplorable and wretched Condition. Hence the *Cretians*, as *Valerius Maximus* tells us, when they would uſe a moſt bitter Curſe againſt ſuch as they implacably hated, wiſhed * that they might take Delight in ſome evil Cuſtom.

It concerns you therefore to look to yourſelves betimes, and give a ſpeedy Curb to your Vices, and to exerciſe yourſelves daily to the Denial of your Luſts and depraved Affections, that you may not increaſe your natural Obſtinacy by Uſe and Cuſtom in Sin, and by contracting a Habit of it. Deal with your Sins, as *Pharaoh* did with the *Iſraelites*, when he ſaw their Numbers were every Day augmented, ſlay them as they are born, drown them in your penitential Tears, yea, in the very Birth ſtrangle them, and ſuffer them never to come forth. You are thinking perhaps of ſparing and ſaving them at preſent, and you intend to diſpatch them afterwards: but have a Care, deceive not yourſelves. If you let them live and grow up, they may be too ſtrong for you, and it will be out of your Power to deal with them. Therefore nouriſh not theſe little Brats, but what you intend to do, do now, deſtroy them immediately, leſt when they grow greater they deſtroy you. Unleſs you hinder theſe growing Evils, they will encreaſe to an immenſe Magnitude, and you will not be able to grapple with them. We may obſerve, that *Judas* envied the Box of Ointment at firſt; he began with that, he would have had it ſold under Pretence of relieving the Poor: But from ſelling the Ointment he proceeds to ſell his Maſter. By not checking his *Covetouſneſs* at firſt, he at laſt became a *Traytor.* This may warn us to ſtifle the early Ebullitions of Vice in our Minds, leſt it encreaſe upon us, and produce a long Continuance in Sinning, and an accuſtomary Commiſſion of Vice, which will bring us to the unhappy *Neceſſity* of perſiſting in it; and all our Striving afterwards will be in vain. Therefore ſtifle the firſt Motions and Eruptions of Sin, leſt they riſe by little and little to ſuch a Degree as you will not be able to conquer them. Know this, that nothing can prevent the Heighth and extream Growth of Vice in you, but a timely and early Denial of your Concupiſence.

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* *Eccleſ.* vii. 3.

* Μάλιϛα δὲ προφυλακτέον ἐν ταῖς προπαθείαις ϗ προαισθήσεσιν. *De San. tuend.*

* *Diog. Laert.*

* *Ut malâ conſuetudine delectentur.* Lib. 7. cap. 2.

And here, by the way, ſee the Abſurdity and Folly of thoſe Perſons who plead for their Sins, that they have been *accuſtomed* to them, they have a long Time lived in them, and now they cannot tell how to leave them. The *Iſraelites* were uſed to worſhip a Calf in *Egypt*, and therefore they muſt have a Calf when they come into the Wilderneſs. It is my Cuſtom to ſwear, ſaith the common Swearer, and I cannot do otherwiſe. It is my Cuſtom to drink to Exceſs, ſaith the common Drunkard, and now I cannot ſpend the Days and Nights without it. It is my Cuſtom to cheat and lye, or to purſue this or that Vice, ſaith a Third, and now 'tis become a ſecond Nature to me, and it cannot be laid aſide. I hope I need not ſay much to convince any Perſon of the Groſſneſs of this Folly, and to ſhew that Cuſtom and Preſcription are no good Plea, no valid Argument in this Caſe. For if Swearing, and Drunkenneſs, and Lying, or the like Sins, be unlawful in *themſelves*, it is impoſſible that Cuſtom ſhould make them otherwiſe. Cuſtom cannot make that to be no Sin, which really is one. Yea, it is ſo far from doing this, and from legitimating of Vice, and taking away the Guilt of it, that it greatly increaſes it. The Habit of Lying, Swearing, and exceſſive Drinking, or any other Sin doth not mitigate the Fault, but rather doubles it, and adds new Guilt, and renders the Crime exceeding heinous. It is the higheſt Aggravation of a Sin that it is grown into a Habit, and is become an inveterate and chronical Diſeaſe. Wherefore 'tis Time to look after a Cure, leſt the Diſtemper prove remedileſs and incurable. Whereas then you ſay, you have a Cuſtom of Sinning, and therefore you cannot leave Sinning, I pray obſerve how weak your Inference is. You have accuſtomed yourſelves ro Sin, therefore you ſhould continue in it no longer, therefore you ought to betake yourſelves to hearty Repentance, and to bid adieu to every vicious Practice. This is the true and genuine Conſequence which you ſhould make from the Premiſſes.

Fourthly, If you would *ſtrive* to purpoſe to enter in at the Strait Gate, then make Conſcience of the *leaſt Sin.* The World uſually commends *ſome Sins* to Mens Practice by telling them, that they are *little and inconſiderable*; and therefore they muſt not *ſtrain at Gnats*, and boggle at ſmall Offences and Peccadillos. Idle Words and vain Thoughts, and daily Slips and Aberrations of their Lives ſhall not be accounted for, and why ſhould Men be ſollicitous about them? If Men can keep themſelves from *great Offences*, they need not fear entring into the Strait Gate, they cannot miſs of Heaven. *Leſſer Sins* are pardoned of Courſe (they ſay), and therefore they will not hurt us. But, notwithſtanding this Plea of Sinners, I ſay ſtill, abſtain from the *leaſt Sins. Plutarch* could ſay, * "It is a Sign of Proficiency in Vertue, "to think no Sin little, but ſtudiouſly to avoid and beware "of all. If you would *ſtrive* to enter into Life, you muſt "ſhun the leaſt Offences."

For *Firſt*, Will you dare to *offend God* in *little* Things? If you will venture his Diſpleaſure to gratify yourſelves in ſome *ſmall Matters*, you ſhew that

* τὸ μηδὲν ἔτι μικρὸν ἡγεῖσθαι τῶν ἁμαρτανομένων, ἀλλ' ἐξευλαβεῖσθαι καὶ προσέχειν ἅπασιν. *De prof. Vir.*

that you ſlight the Favour of God which is better than Life, and that you diſregard the Anger and Wrath of the Almighty which is worſe than Death. *Secondly*, Is any Thing *little* that *God forbids?* Doth not the Apoſtle St. *James* acquaint us, that *he that breaks one law*, tho' a leſſer one, *is guilty of the breach of all*, the Breach of any ſhewing our Contempt of him who is the Author of all? Therefore account no Sin little, give not Way to the ſmalleſt Vice. *Thirdly*, Have not the *leaſt Sins*, the *Nature of Sin*, not only on this Account, that they are a Tranſgreſſion of the divine Law, but becauſe they are in their own Nature evil, and alſo becauſe they are directly contrary to the Nature of God, who is pure and holy? For *this* Reaſon you are obliged even to avoid *little Sins*. *Fourthly*, Have not little and inconſiderable Beginnings arrived to ſtrange and prodigious Ends? Which is thus expreſſed by St. *James*, *chap.* iii. *ver.* 5. [Behold! how *great* a Matter a *little* Fire kindleth?] A contemptible Spark blown up and encreaſed may ſet a whole City on fire. * Little Sticks ſerve to make greater Wood burn, ſay the *Talmudick* Doctors, that is, little Sins make Way for greater. Who ſees not that petty Oaths bring on bloody Swearing? Filching and Pilfering arrive at laſt to more impudent Stealing and downright Robbery. Immodeſt Dalliance proceeds to Fornication. Anger grows to Murder. Excellently therefore that *Apocryphal* Writer, * *Give not Water Paſſage, no not a little*, meaning it without Doubt in a ſpiritual Senſe. Give not Way to leſſer Sins, becauſe thereby a greater Breach will be made. A little Leaven leaveneth the whole Lump. The Leproſy, which over-runs the whole Body, begins at firſt with a Spot. Thoſe which you call little Sins lead to greater Ones. Have you not Reaſon then to abſtain from the Former, that you may not be guilty of the Latter?

Is it not neceſſary then, that we ſhould pray and alſo endeavour, not only to be *innocent from the great Tranſgreſſion*, but even from that which is leſſer? Is not this dangerous and deſtructive as well as the other? The Apoſtle aſſures you that it is, for he ſpeaks indefinitely in *Rom.* vi. 23. *The wages of ſin is death.* Sin conſider'd in itſelf, Sin in it's own Nature, Sin of what Kind or Degree ſoever, is fatal and deadly. A Crum of Bread, the Stone of a Raiſin, or a Fly, have diſpatched ſome as effectually as Swords and Cannons, and greater Inſtruments of Death, have ſlain others. Sinful Thoughts, idle Words, wanton Looks, ſingle Acts of Vice, if delighted in and never repented of, may debar us from Heaven. Look therefore upon no Sin as ſmall. And as you muſt be careful to ſhun the leaſt Sins, ſo you are obliged to diſcharge the leaſt Duties. * Be as obſervant, ſay the *Rabbins*, of the Leſſer as of the Greater Commandment: Be as forward to obey the one, as the other, tho' it be of an inferior Degree. In your ſtriving to enter into Life and Glory follow this Rule, and you cannot miſcarry.

Fifthly, That your *Striving* may be ſucceſsful, remember to *abſtain from all Appearance of Evil*, according to the expreſs Command of the Apoſtle, 1 *Theſ.* v. 22. Shun every Thing which hath the Reſemblance of Sin, and the Likeneſs of Vice, and ſeems to border upon it. That the Sons of *Noah* might abhor all Cruelty, Bloodſhed, and Murder, they were commanded to abſtain even from the Blood of Beaſts. That they might not ſhed the Blood of Men, they were forbidden even that of Brutes. It is not unworthy your obſerving, that the *Nazarite* who was to abſtain and ſeparate himſelf from Wine and ſtrong Drink, was alſo forbid to drink any Thing like them, as Vinegar of Wine, or of ſtrong Drink, or any Liquor of Grapes, any Thing wherein Grapes were ſteeped. The very Tincture of Wine was unlawful. Nor was he permitted to * eat either moiſt or dry Grapes, or ſo much as the Kernel of a Grape, or the Husk or Skin of one. The wiſe *Hebrews* would not let the *Nazarites* ſo much as ſet their Foot into the Vineyards, that they might keep their Vow the better. O thou *Nazarite*, go about, go about, and do not come near the Vineyard, was a *proverbial* Saying with them: And it teacheth us this, that we muſt avoid the Occaſions of Sin. The *Nazarite* being bid to abſtain from Wine, muſt not come where it is. We muſt carefully ſhun all thoſe Things, which we are ſenſible may lead us to the Commiſſion of Sin. We muſt not come on the Devil's Ground, we muſt ſtand at a good Diſtance from Vice. We muſt fly far from it, and not approach ſo much as its Suburbs and Confines.

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* *Lignum parvum accendit majus.*

* *Ecclus.* xxv. 27.

* *Tam cautus eſto in obſervatione præcepti levioris, quàm gravioris. Curre ad præceptum leve tanquam ad præceptum grave.* Cap. Patr.

* *Numb.* vi. 3, 4.

You will find, that the very *Appearance* of Evil is looked upon by God (and then why ſhould it not be looked upon ſo by us?) as heinous as the *Evil itſelf*, if you compare *Ex.* xxxii. 6. with 1 *Cor.* x. 7. The Children of *Iſrael*'s *ſitting down to eat and drink*, mentioned in the former Place, is interpreted to be no other than *Idolatry* in the Latter. Tho' they did not worſhip the golden Calf, nor offer Sacrifice to that Idol, yet the Apoſtle lets us know, that to *feaſt and make merry* at that Seaſon was Idolatry; the *eating* of any of the Offerings was abominable. And accordingly he acquaints the *Corinthians* that it was unlawful to be preſent at the Feaſts in Idol-Temples, altho' they were convinced, that an Idol is nothing in itſelf, and altho' they did not ſacrifice to Idols. The Sitting at the ſame Table with Idolaters at their ſolemn Feaſts, or eating ſuch Meats as were offered to Idols, was a Thing not to be practiſed by Chriſtians. This was in Purſuance of the Apoſtle's forenamed Rule, *Abſtain from all Appearance of Evil.* And in Obedience to this Precept we read, that the primitive Chriſtians abſtained from going to Stage-Plays and the common Spectacles and Shews which were expoſed on the Theatres among the *Pagans*; and ſeveral *other* Cuſtoms and Uſages (which were then daily practiſed by the *Heathens*) they refrained from, that they might not *approach* to any Thing, which looked like Sin and Vice, and that it might be ſeen, that they thought it unlawful to comply with the Faſhions and Guiſes of vain Men.

Nay, this Compliance, tho' it be but in Words, is not allowable; to which Purpoſe that Paſſage of the Pſalmiſt in *Pſal.* xvi. 4. is remarkable, where ſpeaking of *Idolaters*, he ſaith, *Their offerings of blood I will not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.* I will not ſo much as name and mention their impure and idolatrous Practices, I will not hold any Diſcourſe concerning them. For that Men might be kept from approaching to Idolatry, or make the leaſt Step towards it, God forbad even the naming of it. *Be circumſpect, and make no mention of the names of other Gods*, Exod. xxiii. 13. Not only Worſhipping of them is a Sin, but the Mentioning them in Oaths, or in common Diſcourſe. The very Names of Idols and falſe Gods are abominable, and to be avoided. In Imitation of this perhaps the *Jews* uſed to call a *Swine* (which was an abominable Thing among them) * *another Thing*; they abhorred to mention the true Name of it before their Children, that their Ears might not hear the Name of ſo loathed a Thing, and leſt they ſhould take Occaſion thence to aſk about it, and at laſt to eat of it. The Apoſtle tells us that ſome Things are not ſo much as to be *once named* among Chriſtians, *Eph.* v. 3. the very Sound of the Words is not to be hear'd among them. Or if that be not the Apoſtle's Meaning, this without all Doubt is, that no Man ought to open his Mouth in behalf of thoſe things, he is not to give the leaſt Approbation and Allowance to them, or to any Thing like them.

* *Cartwright* Mellific. Hebraic.

And this is the Thing which I urge upon you, That you would not do any Thing, that *ſeems* to be ſinful, which hath but the meer Shew and Umbrage of Vice. If you like the Shadow, you may in Time not diſlike the *Subſtance.* You may read in the *Roman* Hiſtory, that *Domitian* from killing of Flies proceeded to the ſheedding of human Blood. If you favour the *Semblance and Appearance* of Vice, you may be induced to approve of the very Reality. You are concerned therefore to ſhew your Diſlike of the Former. Come not near the Brink of Vice, leſt you fall in. Defend the Marches, overſee and keep the Bounds and Frontiers. Hold no Correſpondence with the Enemy; give a Repulſe to every Thing which may nouriſh your ſinful Inclinations and Deſires; ſubtract the Fuel of Vice, damm up the Springs which feed your Luſts. Give not Satan ſo much as any Footing: Shun him as ſoon as you eſpy him, and fly from him as from a Serpent, for ſuch he is. Come not within the Reach of the Baſiliſk's Eyes, or the Panther's Breath. If you ſtrive for Heaven, venture not to come nigh the Borders of Hell: Shun all Affinity with Vice, avoid whatever looks like it.

Sixthly, I have this to commend to you in order to your *Striving* with good Succeſs, namely, that *you always be fearful*. This Rule (as well as the other Directions which I offer to you) is drawn from the holy Scripture, being expreſsly ſet down by St. *Paul* in *Phil.* ii. 12. [Work out your own Salvation with *Fear* and *Trembling*:] And he adds [for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good Pleaſure]. It is *God that worketh*, therefore you have no Reaſon to *deſpair*; but you muſt work out your Salvation with *Fear and Trembling*, which implies that there is no Place for *Preſumption*. It is from meer Grace and Mercy that God worketh in you, wherefore you muſt be cautious and wary, you muſt live in a conſtant Fear of provoking him, who is ſo merciful and gracious: For he will abſtract his Grace, if you turn it into Wantonneſs. Theſe two Words *Fear* and *Trembling* are joined together by the Apoſtle in other Places, as in 1 *Cor.* ii. 3. and vii. 15. and in *Eph.* vi. 5. referring both to God and Man: And they ſet forth and expreſs to us that great *Caution* and *Circumſpection* which we ought conſtantly to maintain. But *here* eſpecially both theſe Words put together ſignify that *great Care and Study* we ſhould have of *pleaſing God* in all we do. Always be *fearful* of ſinning againſt him. Work out your Salvation with Fear and Trembling; with *Fear*, leſt you come ſhort of it; with *Trembling*, leſt having made ſome Progreſs in it, you fall back, and be not able to recover yourſelves. Stand in Awe of *God*, have a *Reverence* of the divine Majeſty. Fear Sin, leſt you offend God by it. But you will beſt of all underſtand the Nature of this *godly Fear and Trembling* by this threefold Oppoſition.

Firſt, Look upon this Fear as it ſtands in Oppoſition to *Contempt* and *Irreverence*; and ſo it is a reverential Dread both of the *great God* and of his terrible *Judgments* on Sinners. Our God is a conſuming Fire: he hates and abhors all Sin, and hates nothing but that. His Nature being oppoſite to it, he muſt needs loath and abominate it. Let us then ſtand in *Awe* and ſin not, conſidering the dreadful Puniſhments which will overtake us for our Sins. For God will not be mocked: Wilful Offenders ſhall not go unpuniſhed. Let *this* beget a holy *Fear* in us, and make us *tremble* at the Inſtances of God's Severity and Vengeance in the World.

Secondly, Underſtand this *Fear* in Oppoſition to *Pride and Preſumption*, and ſo it is no other than Humility. [Be not then *High-minded*, but fear;] As the Apoſtle exhorts, *Rom.* xi. 12. As much as to ſay, if you be high-minded, you will not fear; if you be of haughty atd proud Spirits, you will not entertain this holy Gueſt in your Souls, you will baniſh godly Fear, and you will grow confident and preſumptuous. To prevent which, you muſt remember that you are in this Life in a State of Probation, you are now upon your good Behaviour, you are upon your Trial for Eternity. Wherefore you ought to deport yourſelves humbly and modeſtly, to be ſuſpicious of yourſelves, and to fear the worſt as to your Condition. When Chriſt told his Diſciples that one of them ſhould betray him, every one of them began to ſuſpect himſelf. Such a Timorouſneſs and Jealouſy ſhould we have of ourſelves. We ſhould doubt and queſtion our Sincerity and Integrity; we ſhould fear leſt we are not of the Number of the Faithful, leſt our Condition be not ſuch as we think it to be. There is a Sabbath, an everlaſting Reſt remaining for the People of God: *Let us* (as the Apoſtle ſaith) *fear leſt any of us come ſhort of that bleſſed reſt.*

Thirdly, Take this *Fear* in Oppoſition to *Security*, and ſo it is no other than *Watchfulneſs*. *Watch therefore*; *for you know not the day*, *nor the hour*, *when the ſon of man cometh.* Remind yourſelves of this often, that this Life is ſhort and tranſitory, that your Breath is in your Noſtrils, and that you may ſoon expire it. Live here then, as thoſe that muſt live hereafter. Walk uprightly before God, and diſcharge a good Conſcience. Always ſtand upon your Guard, prepare againſt the worſt, be ever wary and watchful. Thus you ſee the Oppoſition of this holy *Fear* unto it's dangerous *Contraries*: Which I hope hath given you an Inſight into the Nature of this Duty.

Be prevailed with now to put it into Practice; paſs the Time of your Sojourning here in Fear; act like timorous and cautious Perſons, and herein ſhew yourſelves truly wiſe: For *a wiſe man*, ſaith *Solomon*, *feareth*, *and departeth from evil*, Prov. xiv. 16. And as this Fear is the Cauſe of his departing from Sin, ſo it powerfully ſtirs him up to all Holineſs. The ſame Words in the *Greek* denote * *Fear* and † *Religion* to intimate to us their great Affinity; he that is duly fearful and circumſpect, will certainly be religious and holy. Therefore whilſt you are ſtriving for Heaven and Happineſs, be ſure that you maintain this godly Fear. Lodge this always in your Thoughts, that many Perſons had not miſſed of the heavenly Bleſſedneſs, if they had not been ſecure. Therefore whatever you do, baniſh Security and Preſumption. Be careful to cheriſh the holy Spirit, and to indear it to you: Often examine your State, and take an Account of your Life and Actions. In a Word, be not confident, and void of Fear.

* 'Ευλάϐεια, *metus*, *reverentia*. † Ευλαϐὴς, *religioſus*, *timidus*.

Seventhly and *Laſtly*, If you deſire to *ſtrive* effectually, there are two other eminent Graces, which I commend to you, which if you attain, all your Work is done. Theſe Graces are *Faith* and *Love*. Faith is the great Inſtrument, whereby we gain Power over Satan, and free ourſelves from his Temptations and Snares. * With this *Shield we are able to quench all his fiery Darts*. And an other Apoſtle acquaints us, that † *this is the Victory which overcomes the World*, *even our Faith*. Great and mighty Conquerors have talked much of overcoming the World. But Faith is the moſt eminent Conqueror, and effects this really, and to the beſt Purpoſe. Faith preſents us with the greateſt Spoils and Trophies, this ſubdueth and vanquiſheth whereſoever it comes. Faith doth all Things, this fits us for all Duties and Exerciſes of Religion: Whence *Faith* is the Word ſometimes for all Vertue and Religion in the *New Teſtament*. This capacitates us for the Reception of all Grace, this enables us to encounter all our ſpiritual Enemies, and to defeat them. Through Faith nothing is impoſſible to us: For there is a Kind of Omnipotency in this ſpiritual Endowment. This carries us through all Difficulties and Hardſhips; this makes its Way through all Oppoſition and Diſcouragement whatſoever: And therefore your ſtriving to enter in at the Strait Gate will aſſuredly be effectual, if it be accompanied with Faith.

* *Eph.* vi. 16.
† 1 *John*, v. 4.

But unto Faith you muſt add *Love*, and then your Striving will be yet more ſucceſsful and proſperous; and ſpiritual Victory and Conqueſt will ever attend you. *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us*, ſaith St. *Paul*, *2 Cor.* v. 14. and it hath the *ſame* Effect and Influence on all the Servants of God; it lays a holy Conſtraint upon them, it forces and compels them, it powerfully and effectually carries them on to diſcharge a good Conſcience, and to obey all God's Commands. *This Love* is as ſtrong as Death, which overcomes All. It conquers whereſoever it appears, and nothing is able to withſtand it. He that ſincerely *loves* God and Goodneſs, and entertains Religion with a hearty Affection, is thereby indued with extraordinary Strength and Power to grapple with Satan, the World, and the Fleſh, to extirpate Luſt and vain Deſires, to curb Sin and Folly, and to *undertake* the greateſt and moſt difficult Tasks in Religion, and to *finiſh* them with great Succeſs. In a Word, what is there that cannot be atchieved by theſe two, the *good Fight of Faith*, and the *Labour of Love?* Be very induſtrious and zealous to attain to *Theſe*, and then ſtrive to enter in at the Strait Gate, and your Striving will infallibly be ſucceſsful: Which is the Thing that I have been aiming and directing you to in ſeveral plain Diſcourſes, and now I will put a Period to them.

I may ſay then, as *Moſes* to the *Iſraelites*, *I have ſet before you Life and Good*, *Death and Evil: therefore chuſe Life*, *and avoid Death and Deſtruction*. I have largely diſcours'd of the Nature of the Broad and Narrow Way, the Wide and the Strait Gate. I beſeech you now ſeriouſly recollect what I have ſaid, and act accordingly. Shun the Broad Path which leads to Hell and Miſery; and ſtrive to enter in at the Strait Gate, which will directly bring you to Life and Bleſſedneſs. Conſider that it is for your *immortal Souls* that this *great Care and Caution*, this *Striving and Endeavouring* muſt be uſed. This is

Incentive ſufficient to any ſober and wiſe Perſon, who is apprehenſive of the *Worth of his Soul.* I pray think with your ſelves, which is the greater Concernment, your Souls, or your Bodies, the Things of this World, or thoſe of an other. Do you not underſtand that *this*, which I have been ſo long treating of in divers Sermons, is the *one Thing neceſſary?* Therefore aſk your ſelves, whether you have ſeriouſly attended to this important Subject, and whether it hath made a ſufficient Impreſſion on your Minds. Are you ſenſible that there is a Strait Gate and a Narrow Way? And alſo that there is a Wide Gate and a Broad Way; and that one leads to Life and Happineſs, and the other to Deſtruction and Damnation?

And have you *endeavoured* to enter in at the Former of theſe, and to avoid and ſhun the Latter? Can you ſay that you have *ſtrove?* Have you taken Pains to purchaſe Life and Bliſs, and to eſcape the Damnation of Hell? Can you ſay, that you ſtrive as earneſtly after Heaven, as after the Profits and Pleaſures of this Life? Do you not rather give your ſelves over to Eaſe, and refuſe the Labour (tho' you are willing to bear the Name) of *Chriſtians?* Is it not the Height of your Wiſhes that the Strait Gate were made Broader and Eaſier? Do you not complain and murmur againſt the Difficulties in Religion and Holineſs? And yet at the ſame Time find greater Hardſhips in Vice and Folly? Are you not uneaſy in the Publick Worſhip and Service of God? Do you not wiſh your ſelves in an other Place and Company? Do you not count it troubleſome to ſearch the Holy Scriptures, to read them with great Attention, to meditate on them, and to examine your Lives and Conſciences by them? Are not your private Addreſſes to God yet more troubleſome, are not your ſecret Acts of Devotion very irkſome to you? Can you with great Earneſtneſs and Importunity beg the Aſſiſtance of God to ſubdue your Sins, to mortify your Luſts, and to deny all your evil Appetites and Deſires? Have you learn'd to govern your Thoughts, and to keep your Hearts with all Diligence? Are you not backward to forgive your offending Brother, and to paſs by his Follies and Miſcarriages? Can you willingly condeſcend to any mean Office of Love towards him? Is it not too painful and laborious to aſſert and defend your Religion, when it is oppoſed and perſecuted? Can you part with your Riches and Honours for Jeſus? Can you deſpiſe the Allurements of the World, and ſlight all its Pomp and Gaiety? Can you abandon your moſt pleaſurable Vices, even thoſe which have got the greateſt Poſſeſſion of your Souls? Are you not loth to uſe all the Means which are preſcribed you in order to eſcaping eternal Damnation, and obtaining the Favour of God? Nay, are you not idle and unactive, notwithſtanding you have ſo much to do? Do you not ſit ſtill, tho' your Work be ſo great?

The Number of theſe Perſons is very large in the World. They never *ſtrive* to enter into Happineſs, they never *ſeek* the Kingdom of God. If Heaven and Happineſs will arrive of themſelves, they are well contented: But otherwiſe, they care not for them. They will put themſelves to no Trouble to gain them. They are for the Reward, but not the Work. They are for the Wages, but not for the Labour; they are for Heaven, but they will not leave Earth and their Sins for it. But my Buſineſs hath been to perſuade you to be of an other Mind, and to act in a far different Manner. I have ſhew'd you that eternal Life and Glory are not attainable by Sloth and Negligence. No: You muſt be ſtirring and active, you muſt be buſy and induſtrious, if you entertain any Hopes of Undertaking and Performing that great Work. It is ſaid, that *Alexander* (ſurnamed the Great) wept to hear the Philoſophers aſſert that there were *more Worlds* than This, and he wept becauſe he had not conquer'd this *One.* Certainly it will better become *you* to ſit down and be very ſorrowful and penſive that *ſo much* is to be done, ſo *many Worlds of Iniquity* (according to St. *James*'s Stile) are to be ſubdued and conquered, and yet you have done ſo little hitherto, that you have made no Progreſs in your Conqueſts.

Let the Conſideration of this prevail with you, to caſt away Sloth, and to ſet your ſelves to the Work of Religion with the greateſt Diligence and Ardency. Abandon all Eaſe and Softneſs, ſpare no Pains, go through all Difficulties, lay aſide every Weight, rid your ſelves of all Impediments and Hindrances;

drances; reſolve to make your Paſſage thro' the Strait Gate, thro' the Narrow Way, whatever befalls you. No Hardſhips muſt deter you in this Way that leads to Life, becauſe you cannot be happy but in this Way. *Democritus* was wont to ſay of *Truth*, that it lies in a profound Pit. This is certainly true of *Happineſs*, it is hard to come at; you muſt dig and dive for it. It lies very deep: You muſt ſpare no Labour, you muſt think no Pains and Endeavours too great to purchaſe everlaſting Bliſs. Wherefore ariſe, and ſet about the Work; abandon your Sins forthwith; bid adieu to your Luſts; take Heed leſt you be hardned thro' the Deceitfulneſs of Sin: For he that ſins wilfully, and continues in the Practice of Vice, will certainly harden his Heart, and contract a Habit of Sin: And then it will be next to an Impoſſibility to leave his beloved Sins, and to forſake the Way of Wickedneſs, and to turn unto God.

Therefore I intreat you to ponder the Things that I have ſaid, know your true Concern, underſtand your beſt Intereſt; pray, meditate, watch, endeavour, ſtrive: For eternal Life is worth *all this*. Oh think how *neceſſary* it is, that you ſhould have a *great Care* to be ſaved. The Broad Way lies before you; it hath Two Paths. On one Hand is Prophaneneſs, on the other is Hypocriſy and Formality. You muſt with equal Care avoid both. Therefore you have no Time to be idle and unconcern'd. But it is your Wiſdom to be wary and vigilant, and to be ſenſible of your Condition, and of what you are to do. There is a City prepared for you, a Houſe not built with Hands: But there is a Gate to go thro' firſt, before you can enter into the City, before you come into the Houſe, before you can arrive at Heaven and Happineſs. Let nothing ſtop you in your Attempts and Enterprizes which tend to *This*; let nothing retard you in your Way to Bleſſedneſs; let nothing be able to divert you from it. You muſt expect to meet with great Difficulties, but encounter them manfully. You muſt not ſtand with your Arms acroſs; you muſt by no Means indulge a lazy and ſlothful Temper. Perſuade not your ſelves, that *faint Wiſhes* will ſerve your Turn.

When can I more ſeaſonably inculcate that of the Apoſtle, in *Eph.* v. 15, 16. *See that ye walk circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe, redeeming the time, becauſe the days are evil. Circumſpection* is that, which will effectually promote the Deſign which I have been laying before you. Be then very cautious and accurate; ſtep not aſide to the Right Hand, or to the Left; have your Eye on that *direct Path* which leads to Life and Glory, and walk in it continually. Deſire, long, pant, and breathe after Heaven; wreſtle with God by importunate Prayer; reſolve and vow to live a ſtrict Life; let it be your chief Care to be of the Number of *thoſe few* that enter in at the Strait Gate. If you miſcarry *here*, you are for ever undone; if you neglect your Time *now*, you can never mend the Matter afterwards. Therefore be exhorted to devote your ſelves to this Employment, and mind it above all Things whatſoever, bearing *this great Truth* always in your Thoughts, that no Labours, Endeavours, and *Strivings* can be too great to *attain Heaven*, and that we can never *eſcape Hell* at too dear a Rate.

DISCOURSES
ON THE
INDUCEMENTS and MOTIVES,
To the Practiſing of all the GRACES and DUTIES before-mention'd and inſiſted upon.

THE INTRODUCTION.

IN the fourth and laſt Place, I am to ſpeak of the *Inducements* and *Motives* we have, to practiſe all thoſe Duties and Graces which I have above mention'd and inſiſted upon. And theſe are as remarkable as the Duties and Graces themſelves. We have Great *Encouragement* to Virtue and Religion, and the keeping God's Commandments. There are prevalent and powerful *Incentives* to quicken our Deſires and Endeavours after a Holy Life. They are ſuch as theſe, 1. The Univerſal *Profitableneſs* and *Advantage* of Religion. 2. The *Eaſineſs* and *Pleaſantneſs* of it. 3. The noble *Freedom* which attends it. 4. The *Joys* and *Solaces* of a godly Life. 5. The *Wiſdom* of being holy and religious. 6. The *Folly* of all Sin and Vice. 7. The Judgments and Puniſhments that attend Sinners. Theſe are chief Perſwaſives and Motives to obeying God's Will, and obſerving his Laws. I begin with the Firſt of theſe, namely, *The Univerſal Profitableneſs of Religion and Holineſs.*

The UNIVERSAL
ADVANTAGE
OF
RELIGION and HOLINESS.

1 Timothy iv. 8.

For bodily Exerciſe profiteth little, but Godlineſs is profitable unto all Things, having the Promiſe of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.

SOME are of Opinion, that the *firſt Clauſe* of theſe Words refers to that Celibacy and Abſtinence, which the Apoſtle had ſpoken of before, *v.* 3. *Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abſtain from Meats.* This bodily and external Way of Religion is of *little* or no Advantage: Religion conſiſts not in theſe Things: * *The Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink,* that is, the Goſpel doth not chiefly concern itſelf in ſuch outward Obſervances: Christianity is not made up of ſuch low and mean Things. Or, the Text may refer to the Words immediately foregoing, *Refuſe prophane and old Wives Fables, and exerciſe thyſelf rather unto Godlineſs.* Reject the Traditions of vain People, mind not thoſe humane Devices and Inventions, be not ſollicitous about ſuch trifling and ſuperſtitious Things as the *Gnoſticks,* and ſuch like Hereticks, preach up: Place not your Religion in mortifying the Body, or any needleſs Auſterities; for theſe (alas!) *profit* but *little,* if they may be ſaid to profit at all. Or, (if you pleaſe to accept of my Conjecture) perhaps the Apoſtle alludes to the *Athletick Exerciſes,* which were uſual in thoſe Days among the *Grecians,* and to which he very often refers, both in this Epiſtle and in moſt of his other Writings, as thoſe that are skill'd in them know very well. He had ſaid juſt before, *Exerciſe thyſelf unto Godlineſs,* that is, be as eager and induſtrious in Purſuit of Godlineſs, as thoſe, that are train'd up to the *Olympick* Games, are in their Fighting, Running, and Wreſtling for Victory: for the Word, which the Apoſtle here uſeth, properly ſignifies *That ſort of Exerciſe.* Wherefore, now he moſt oppoſitely adjoins this, that *that Exerciſe of their Bodies,* is uſeful to ſome Ends: it is true, ſaith he, it *profiteth a little;* ſome few Perſons may be advantaged by it, as to Health, and Courage, and gaining Repute and Credit, and winning the Prize, and receiving a fading Reward;

* Rom. xiv. 17.

ward; but theſe are poor and inconſiderable Things, this Profit is not to be named in compariſon of that Profit and Advantage which accrue to us by Godlineſs, or a religious Life: for this is *profitable to all Things*, it not only procures all Benefits and Bleſſings to the Body but to the Soul; it advances both the temporal and eternal Intereſt of thoſe who ſtudy and practiſe it. Godlineſs is profitable unto all Things, having the Promiſe of this Life, and that which is to come.

That Godlineſs is profitable as to *another World*, is generally acknowledg'd, that it hath the Promiſe of a future Life is not doubted of; all Men that own Religion ſay, that the Good ſhall be happy hereafter. But that which is chiefly queſtion'd and made a Matter of Doubt, is the Profitableneſs of Godlineſs as to *this World*, and how it hath the Promiſe of *this Life*. That therefore, which I will undertake from theſe Words, is to prove, that Religion is attended with ſecular Profit and worldly Advantage, and that the Promiſe of the good Things of this Life is fulfill'd to thoſe that are godly. This is intimated to us in the Holy Language, where the ſame * Word is rendred both *good* and *proſperous*, as is evident from *Iſai.* xxx. 10. *Jer.* xxii. 16. ---xliv. 17. and many other Places. All manner of *Advantage* and *Happineſs* accrue to us by our *being good*, and by our doing our Duty. Whatſoever we do ſhall proſper. Godlineſs is the greateſt temporal Intereſt, not only in reſpect of Nations and Communities, but with reference to every individual Perſon. True Religion and Holineſs conduce to the publick and private Welfare. If we heartily reſolve to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, and ſincerely to obey God's Holy Laws; we ſhall experimentally find, that this will procure Health and Long Life, Peace and Safety, Riches and Wealth, Honour and Repute. Theſe are the Four Topicks I will inſiſt upon.

I. Godlineſs is the Procurer of *Health* and *Long Life*. What elſe is the Meaning of the Pſalmiſt's Words, in *Pſal.* xxxiv. 12, 13. *What Man is he that deſireth Life, and loveth many Days, that he may ſee good? Keep thy Tongue from Evil, and thy Lips from ſpeaking guile: Depart from Evil, and do Good.* As much as to ſay, be careful to mind all Parts of Religion: ſet a Watch over your Tongue, let not your Words and Speeches diſcover any thing of Wickedneſs and Impiety, but let your whole Life be exact and accurate: do not only depart from Evil, and ſhun the Path of Vice, but enter into the Way of Godlineſs, and walk into it; and this you will find to be the direct Way leading to temporal Felicity, and particularly to a ſound and hale Plight of Body, to a Freedom from Sickneſs, Pains and Diſeaſes, as I will now briefly demonſtrate to you. Firſt, Religion forbids all anxious and diſtracting Thoughts, all Melancholy and Dejection of Mind, and commands us to rejoice and be glad. It bleſſes the true Profeſſors of it with Peace of Conſcience, and Serenity of Spirit, and a pleaſant and chearful Mind, in all the Revolutions of worldly Affairs; and, on this Account, it is immediately ſerviceable to Bodily Health. Some Phyſicians have acquainted us, that ſeveral Perſons have avoided and thrown off their Diſeaſes, merely by *Mirth*. Gladſomeneſs was their beſt Phyſick. And this, I conceive, is the Senſe of the wiſe Man in that Aphoriſm of his, *A joyful Heart doth good like a Medicine, but a mournful Spirit drieth the Bones*, Prov. xvii. 22. A merry Heart, a good Conſcience is healthful; an inward Senſe and Love of Virtue carry Peace and Joy with them, and thereby are ſerviceable to the Welfare of the Outward Man. For, as an intelligent Writer hath long ſince obſerved, † "What raiſes and comforts the Soul, doth alſo relieve and chear the Body, and conduce much to its ſound Temper." Health is the Fruit of Godlineſs, becauſe by this the Heart is dilated, the Blood is ſweeten'd, and all ſoure noxious Ferments are removed.

Again, *Love*, which is a ſanative and healthful Affection, and is the ſweeteſt of all the Paſſions, and *Meekneſs*, which is another hale and ſalutary Diſpoſition of the Soul, are promoted by Religion, and are a Part of it; whence 'tis, that the Blood moves ſedately, and the Pulſe beats regularly and ſoftly, and a pleaſant and wholeſome Warmth is felt in the Breaſt. Farther, Health is the Daughter of Religion, ſhe being brought up and educated by Temperance, that diſcreet and careful Nurſe. Our Religion, as it enjoins Laws of *Moderation* and *Sobriety*, as it forbids us to be *drunk with Wine wherein is Exceſs*, and bids us abſtain from all Riot and Luxury, is attended with an healthful State of Body. Moreover, as it

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* טוב *bonus, felix.*

† *Quicquid animum erigit, etiam prodeſt corpori.* Sen.

dictates *Chaſtity* and *Continence*, and Purity of Body and Mind, it brings with it Health and Long Life.

And as a Religious and Holy Life, in the very Nature and Efficacy of the Thing itſelf, is the Cauſe of a hale Temper of Body, ſo, from the gracious and indulgent Promiſe of God, we are aſcertain'd of this Truth. Thus he encourageth Children to obey their Parents, by aſſuring them that *their days ſhall be long in the land.* And there is the ſame Encouragement to the performing of all the reſt of the Commandments, and doing the other Parts of our Duty. God will bleſs the faithful Doers of his Will with long Life, if this be a Bleſſing ſuitable and convenient for them: for this which I now maintain (as alſo what I ſhall ſay afterwards concerning Peace, and Riches, and Honour) is ſo to be underſtood, that theſe bodily and temporal Gifts may be denied unto, and taken from the beſt and holieſt Men, when the wiſe Overſeer of the World ſhall ſee it fitting and convenient. There is no *abſolute* Promiſe of the conferring or continuing of theſe outward Bleſſings; but this we know, and by Experience are certain of, that they are freely and bountifully beſtow'd on thoſe that fear God, and walk in his Ways. *Solomon*, ſpeaking of the admirable Advantages which accrue to us by the Poſſeſſion of True Wiſdom, tells us, that *Length of Days is in her right Hand*, Prov. iii. 16. that is, the Bleſſing of Health, or Long Life, is the Reward of Holineſs. And the Precedence of the *Right Hand* is here given to it, becauſe among all worldly Bleſſings this is the greateſt and moſt deſirable, and this is the Baſis of them all; for Peace, and Wealth, and Honour are very comfortleſs Enjoyments to the Perſon who labours under Sickneſs and Diſtemper of Body. This Mercy of Health, which is ſo great and precious, is the Acquiſition of a Religious and Holy Life.

But, on the contrary, a wicked and diſorderly Converſation impairs the hale Temper of the Body, and procures mortal Diſeaſes. The inſpired Writings acquaint us, that it was Sin which firſt uſher'd in bodily Infirmities and Maladies into the World, namely, upon the Diſobedience of our firſt Parents: and ever ſince it hath been the Procurer of them. We meddle not with the Phyſician's Employment, but let him alone to his proper Task, which is to enquire into, and give an Account of the *Natural Cauſes* of the irregular and diſtemper'd Conſtitution of the Body. But as the Maſters of Medicks have their peculiar Charge, ſo the Guides and Inſtructors of Souls have theirs too, which is to diſcover the true *Spiritual* Source and Origin of Diſeaſes, and that is our ſinful Behaviour. I think there can't be a greater Demonſtration of this, than what you meet with in the 28th Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, *viz.* that all Kinds of bodily Sickneſſes and Diſeaſes, even the noiſome Peſtilence itſelf, are threaten'd to the *Iſraelites* as the Fruits of their Diſobedience, as the Conſequences of their ſinning againſt Heaven, and violating the divine Commands. And are not the Apoſtle's Words an evident Proof of this, who tells the *Corinthians*, that for their prophaning the Lord's Supper, and other Inſtances of their diſorderly walking, many were weak and ſickly among them, and many ſlept; that is, their Sickneſs prov'd mortal. I have not Time to acquaint you what Reflections ſober Hiſtorians have made upon the ſtrange Diſeaſes (among which the *Sweating Sickneſs* was not the leaſt remarkable) which this Iſland hath experiedced, as if the new and unheard of Vices of its Inhabitants, and the ſtrange Diſtempers of their Minds and Manners had produced thoſe which were of a reſembling Kind in their Bodies. This is certain, that Sin, which is the Sickneſs of the Soul, deſervedly brings with it bodily Diſtempers.

Yea, all Vices, in their own Nature are hurtful to the Body, and ſome more eſpecially, as thoſe fretting Diſorders of Mind, Anger, Hatred, Envy, Malice, Revenge. Theſe breed unwholſome and dangerous Ferments in the Blood, and injure the bodily Health. There are others likewiſe that naturally ingender Diſeaſes, and ſpoil the Conſtitution, and ſhorten the Life, as Drunkenneſs and Luxury, and a Courſe of Intemperance, Whoredom and Adultery, and all lewd and laſcivious Practices. This may be the Senſe of what the Apocryphal Writer ſaith, *Eccl.* xxxviii. 15. *He that ſins againſt his Maker, let him fall into the Hands of the Phyſician:* not that this is ſpoken to the Diſparagement of the Profeſſors of Medicks, if they be Men of Skill and Integrity; otherwiſe indeed it is ſufficient Puniſhment to fall into the Hands of thoſe, who only pretend to that Faculty: But that which is clearly intimated in theſe Words is this, that Sickneſs and Diſeaſes are the natural Effect (as well as the juſt Reward) of Sinning againſt God, and accordingly thoſe, who are ſo afflicted and puniſh'd, have frequent Occaſion to repair to Men of that Profeſſion. Whereas, if they would amend their Lives, and walk religiouſly, they might on good Ground expect to be freed, in a great Meaſure, from bodily Diſtempers, and to be bleſſed with a State of Health. I conclude this Firſt Particular with that Saying of the Jewiſh Rabbies, * *He that multiplieth the Law, multiplieth Life*, that is, he who increaſeth daily in his Obedience to the Law ſhall alſo find the Days of his Life increas'd and multiply'd, and the Welfare of his Body ſhall be the Conſequence of the Health of his Soul.

II. Religion and Godlineſs procure us outward *Peace* and *Safety*: Which I take to be the Import of thoſe Words, *Thou ſhalt not be afraid of the Beaſts of the Earth, for thou ſhalt be in League with the Stones of the Field, and the Beaſts of the Field ſhall be at Peace with thee*, Job v. 22, 23. The Stones of the Field ſhall as it were loſe their Hardneſs, and be incapable of hurting a godly Man. He ſhall not *daſh his Foot* againſt any of them; they ſhall not prove to him *Stones of Stumbling and Offence*, they ſhall rather be raiſed up into a *Wall* about him, and keep off Dangers that aſſault him. The *Beaſts of the Field* ſhall lay aſide their ſavage Nature, and crouch to the Man who hath made his Peace with the Almighty, and kindly comply with all his Deſires. The Meaning of which is this, that tho' a godly Man be beſet with Enemies, whoſe Hearts are as hard and ſenſeleſs as Stones, yet they ſhall be ſuppled and mollify'd, and melt into ſoft Compliances: and though his Enemies be as inhumane and cruel as the wild Beaſts of the Field, yet they ſhall wax tame and gentle, and have no Power to do the good Man any Harm. This hath frequently happen'd, and many Inſtances might be produced to confirm it. This is no other than what you find in the Pſalmiſt's Deſcription of a Holy Man, *Pſal.* xci. 1, *&c.* namely, that *he ſhall abide under the Shadow of the Almighty, that God is his Refuge and Fortreſs, and will cover him with his Feathers, that he ſhall not be afraid for the Terror by Night, nor for the Arrow that flieth by Day*, &c. The Sum is, that he ſhall be bleſſed with Safety and Security. Again, in *Pſal.* cxix. 165. *Great Peace have they which love thy Law, and nothing ſhall offend them.* And *Solomon* ſeconds his Royal Father, *Prov.* i. 33. *Whoſo hearkeneth unto me*, (ſaith Wiſdom) *ſhall dwell ſafely, and ſhall be quiet from fear of Evil.* If you peruſe the Verſes immediately foregoing, you will obſerve here is a pleaſant Calm after a fearful Tempeſt: Juſt as it happen'd when *Elijah* ſtood before the Lord on Mount *Horeb*, we read, that after a great and terrible Wind, which rent the Mountains, and brake the Rocks in Pieces, and after an Earthquake and a Fire, there was heard a ſtill ſmall Voice; ſo it is here: In divers Verſes before *Wiſdom* was very loud and clamorous, thundering out a moſt dreadful Doom againſt obſtinate Sinners, but now ſhe changeth her Note into a pleaſant Strain of Mercy, reviving and refreſhing thoſe who yield Obedience to her, and comply with her bleſſed Counſel: ſhe promiſes and aſſures them that they ſhall be ſecured, whatever becomes of the reſt of the World: *they ſhall dwell ſafely*, their outward Condition ſhall be ſuch that they ſhall be ſafe: and *they ſhall be quiet from the fear of Evil*, they ſhall always enjoy internal Peace and Serenity. The ſame inſpired Author adds in *Prov.* xvi. 7. *When a Man's Ways pleaſe the Lord, he maketh even his Enemies to be at Peace with him.* When we take Care to pleaſe God, we may hope that thoſe who were moſt averſe to us ſhall ſtudy to pleaſe us. He can make the Wolf dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard lie down with the Kid, and the Calf and the young Lion and the Fatling together: that is, he can make Men of wolfiſh and ſavage Spirits to lay aſide their Hoſtilities, to abandon their Rage and Fierceneſs, and to expreſs nothing but Love and Pity, Kindneſs and Good-will. It is recorded of old *Jacob*, that when he was diſpatching his Sons into *Egypt*, he ſent them away with this Prayer, *God Almighty give you Mercy before the Man*, intimating very plainly, that it was in God's Power to incline the Hearts of their Enemies, and Strangers (for ſuch a one *Joſeph* was then repreſented to be) to ſhew Favour and Kindneſs to them. Thus you read afterwards, that the *Lord gave Joſeph Favour in the Sight of the Keeper of the Priſon*, Gen. xxxix. 21. This is the Lord's doing, and it ought to be marvellous in our Eyes. We are oblig'd to take great Notice of it, and to admire the ſingular Goodneſs of the Almighty in it. The Jewiſh Doctors have a Saying to this Purpoſe, † *He that keeps one Commandment gains to himſelf one Advocate and Friend: but he that commits one Sin procures to himſelf one Opponent and Enemy more than he had before.* I might here alledge

* Pirk. Avoth.

† Pirk. Avoth.

alledge that of *Solomon*, Prov. xviii. 10. *The Name of the Lord is a ſtrong Tower: the Righteous run into it, and are ſafe*; with other peculiar Ways of Safety and Peace to holy Men. And this Privilege is indulged to Nations as well as Perſons: Accordingly we read, that among the temporal Bleſſings promis'd to the Jews, as a Reward of their Obedience, this is one, *I will give Peace in your Land*, Lev. xxvi. 6. and in the ſame Verſe, *Neither ſhall the Sword go through your Land.* If we of this Nation reform our Lives, we may thro' the divine Bounty expect the like Bleſſing. By our hearty eſpouſing of Religion, it may come to paſs that our very Enemies may ſhake Hands with us, and admit of a friendly Correſpondence; and a ſucceſsful and laſting Peace may be handed to us by our unkind Blows and martial Hoſtilities. Surely, it was not to any light Purpoſe, that at our Saviour's Coming into the World, the Inhabitants of it were bleſſed with an Univerſal Peace; as if it were to proclaim to the World, that Chriſt brought with him Peace to all Nations, and that the Chriſtian Religion breathes nothing more, and inſpires Mens Minds with Unity and Concord. Like the Dove of Old, it flieth towards us with an Olive Branch in its Mouth, it arrives with ſuch happy Tidings as the Angel once did, *On Earth Peace, Good-will towards Men.* It quiets and pacifies Mens Minds, and keeps them in a ſedate and even Temper.

In the Nature of the Thing itſelf, it muſt needs be thus: for Firſt, the Chriſtian Religion gives Precepts of mutual *Love* and *Charity*, and conſequently dictates Peace and ſweet Compliance, and obliges Men to entire Concord and Agreement, and baniſhes all Feuds, Animoſities, and Contentions. *Love* begets its like, it naturally conciliates Love and Good-will, it makes kind Neighbours and friendly Aſſociates. And all thoſe Attendants and Handmaids of *Love*, the homiletical Graces and Virtues which concern mutual Converſation, as Humanity, and Courteſy, and Affability, and the abandoning of all Moroſeneſs and Auſterity, do in their natural Tendency promote a peaceable Life. So that if this noble Principle of Love were prevalent among Men, we ſhould ſoon ſee Swords beaten into Plough-ſhares, and Spears into pruning Hooks, and all bloody Weapons would be taken out of Mens Hands, and they would not be ſuffered to deſtroy one another.

Again, Religion and true Holineſs inſpire Men with *Humility* and *Condeſcention*, with a meek and lowly Spirit, and on that Conſideration they are extremely conducing to Peace. Which we may eaſily convince ourſelves of, by taking notice how harmful and miſchievous to Society the contrary Vice is, that is, how reſtleſs and turbulent a proud Spirit is, and what Diſturbances are rais'd in Families and Cities, by a haughty and domineering Mind. Pride perverts the Order of Things, and brings Confuſion into the World: This would equal Servants with Maſters, and Subjects with Princes; and tempts Men to forget their Condition and Station. It was long ſince obſerv'd by the wiſe Man, that *by Pride cometh Contention:* Bitter Quarrels and Diſſentions grow from this Root, and conſequently this Vice doth neceſſarily extirpate Peace and Quietneſs.

Next, as Chriſtianity dictates to us the excellent Virtues of *Patience* and *Forbearance*, of not retaining Anger in our Breaſts, of forgiving our Enemies, of doing Good for Evil, and bleſſing thoſe that curſe us, it is unſpeakably ſubſervient to the Peace and Safety of Perſons and Nations.

Beſides, as it enjoins *Sincerity*, *Truth*, and *Faithfulneſs*, it hath abundant Influence on the Quiet of the World. If Integrity and Uprightneſs took place, how firm would be our Leagues, how inviolable our Laws? Then Treachery and Perfidiouſneſs would be baniſh'd from the Courts of Princes, and we ſhould not read in Hiſtories of ſo many Stateſ-men that have counſell'd Kings and Kingdoms into Deſtruction. The *Greek* could ſay of Religion, that it is [*] the Cement of all Communion and Society, and the very Foundation and Prop of all humane Laws. For Religion, inſpiring Men with *Fidelity*, makes them fit to receive Laws, and enables them to hold Commerce with one another, and to enter into Covenants and Agreements, and by this means to keep and nouriſh Peace.

Laſtly, Chriſtianity muſt needs be the Parent of Friendſhip and Peace, becauſe it urges the Practice of *Moderation* and *Self-denial*. *Whence come Wars and Fightings among you?* ſaith St. *James*, and then he immediately ſubjoins this Anſwer, tho' in the Form of an Interrogation; *Come they not hence, even of your Luſts?* Yes, that is the Source and Origin of all the Broils in the World.

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[*] συνεκτικὸν ἁπάσης κοινωνίας, καὶ νομοθεσίας ἔρεισμα. Plut.

Therefore, we muſt needs grant that Peace is the genuine Product of *Religion*, becauſe this retrenches our extravagant *Luſts* and unruly Deſires, and ſets Bounds to the Appetites of the Soul. Thus, upon all theſe Accounts that I have mentioned, the Tranquillity and Safety of a Nation, and of particular Perſons, are ſecured by the Obſervance of the Chriſtian Religion.

III. *Wealth*, *Riches* and *Abundance*, are the happy Acqueſt of Godlineſs. God promis'd his People, that if they would *be willing and obedient, they ſhould eat the Good of the Land*, Iſa. i. 19. that is, they ſhould plentifully enjoy all outward worldly Bleſſings.

Eliphaz reminds *Job* of this even in his loweſt Condition: he aſſures him, that if he *acquaints himſelf with God, and return to the Almighty, and put away Iniquity far from him*, he ſhall thrive and proſper in the World, *he ſhall lay up Gold as Duſt, and ſhall have plenty of Silver*, Job xxii. 24, 25. The Pſalmiſt, deciphering the Advantages which accrue to a godly Man, acquaints us, that *Wealth and Riches ſhall be in his Houſe*, Pſal. cxii. 3. And the Son of this Royal Prophet informs us, that *by Humility and the Fear of the Lord, are Riches, Honour, and Life*, Prov. xxii. 4. Not only *Life*, *i. e.* Long Life and Health (of which I ſpake before) and *Honour* (of which I ſhall ſpeak in the next Place) but *Riches* alſo are the Purchaſe of fearing and ſerving God. It is a Proverb among the *Hebrews*, *Give Tithes that thou may'ſt be rich*. It is very elegant in the *Hebrew*, becauſe of the *Paronomaſia* in * the Words which ſignify *Tithes* and *Riches*. The Meaning of the Proverb is this, that honouring and ſerving of God (which they expreſs by paying of Tithes) are the beſt Courſe that can be taken to promote our worldly Advantage and Profit. Fear God, and reverence his Miniſters, and make Religion your grand Deſign; and then you may expect that God will increaſe your Store, and bleſs you in your ſecular Affairs, and make you thrive and proſper in the World. We read, that the *Old Grecians* uſed to keep their *Treaſures* and great Sums of Money in their *Temples* for their better Security. Let me make this Uſe of it; the Temple will ſecure your Treaſures; Religion, and the Reverence of God, will preſerve, nay increaſe your Eſtates: Piety and Holineſs will promote your worldly Intereſt. That Riches oftentimes are the particular Donative of the God of Heaven to thoſe who are *rich in good Works*, and make it their Care to obey his righteous Laws, is evident from *Prov.* x. 22. *The Bleſſing of the Lord maketh rich:* for they ſhare in his *Bleſſing* in a more ſignal Manner. And this we ſee verified in *Solomon*, who ask'd *Wiſdom* of God, which is a Degree of *Righteouſneſs*, and Lo, God recompenſed him with Abundance of Riches. Thus it ſhall be with all thoſe that truly fear God, they ſhall, at one time or other, find that Godlineſs brings in even worldly Gain, and that they are proſper'd in their Revenues and Incomes, unleſs God in his infinite Wiſdom diſcerns (as I before intimated) that this will not ſuit them, that this is not agreeable to their Condition and Circumſtances, in ſhort that it will not be good for them; and then they will not deſire it, or look upon it as advantageous. And as God thinks fit to bleſs his Servants oftentimes with an Affluence of the Things of this World, ſo on the contrary he, by ſome ſignal Providence, makes Poverty the juſt Reward of Impiety and Unrighteouſneſs. It may be obſerv'd, that ſome Sins eſpecially have that Curſe entail'd upon them by Heaven. Thus it is generally ſeen that God ſuffers not thoſe Eſtates which are gather'd by manifeſt *Cheating*, or by *Oppreſſion* and *Violence*, or any indirect Means to laſt long; but it is frequently ſeen, that thoſe great Incomes end in Want and Penury and ſometimes in downright Beggery. *Philo*'s Words prove true, † "Unrighteous Gains are found to be moſt pernicious, but Riches with Righteouſneſs cannot be taken away." And even as to whole Nations and Countries, the Sacred Writings inform us, that Want and Scarcity, Dearth and Famine, are the Recompence of their Diſobedience. *When the Land ſinneth againſt me by treſpaſſing grievouſly*, ſaith God, (by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, Chap. xiv. 13.) *Then will I ſtretch out my Hand upon it, and will break the Staff of the Bread thereof, and will ſend Famine upon it, and* thereby *cut off Man and Beaſt from it*. To this End God threatens to make the Heavens as Iron, and the Earth as Braſs, becauſe of the more obdurate Temper of Mens Hearts, and by reaſon of their hardening themſelves in their evil Ways. *He turneth a fruitful Land into Barrenneſs, becauſe of the Wickedneſs of them that dwell therein*, Pſal. cvii. 34. An unfruitful

* עשר & עשר.

† Τὰ μὲν ἄδικα κέρδη βλαβερώτατα, ὁ δὲ μετὰ δικαιοσύνης πλοῦτος ἀναφαίρετος. De Creat. Princ.

unfruitful and unptofitable People make the Earth ſo too. It was for the Sin of Man that God firſt curſed the Ground; and for the ſame Reaſon he hath done it ever ſince, whenſoever he thought fit to chaſtiſe either Nations or Perſons for their abominable Practices.

It remains now, that I ſhew how this moſt needs be in the very Nature of the Thing it ſelf. Traffick and Commerce, which are abſolutely neceſſary in all Communities toward the enriching of them, can't poſſibly be maintain'd without *Truth* and *Honeſty*. Trading, the uſual Way to Wealth and a fair Eſtate, ſinks without theſe. Which ſhews how uſeful and profitable the Laws of *Religion* are, for theſe enjoin us Truth and Faithfulneſs, Honeſty and Integrity, toward Men, which are requiſite to the thriving of any People. Again, Religion forbids all *Sloth* and *Idleneſs*, and encourages *Diligence* and *Induſtry* in Mens lawful Callings and Employments, and, on that Account, muſt needs contribute toward the Welfare and Proſperity of a Society; for as Idleneſs is the Parent of Scarcity and Poverty, ſo Induſtry brings in Plenty and Riches.

Next, it is to be conſider'd, that theſe are the Product of *Religion*, as *this* forbids all *Exceſs* and *Prodigality*. It is plain, that thoſe who are profuſe and laviſh are not in the Way to be wealthy. It might be remark'd, that by Frugality and Moderation moſt of the conſiderable Communities in the World have been rais'd, as well as private Families; but Luxury and Riot have deſtroy'd both the one and the other. The Eaſtern Hiſtorians agree in this, that by *Sardanapalus*'s Softneſs and Luxury the *Aſſyrian* Monarchy was remov'd to the *Medes*. The * ſame is obſerv'd of *Xerxes*, that luxurious and effeminate Prince, who confounded the Empire of the *Perſians*. When did Old *Rome* flouriſh? When did the Commonwealth thrive? Was it not when Sobriety and Frugality were generally practis'd, even by their Conſuls and Great Men? On the contrary, *Rome* ran to Decay, when its Emperors and People was given to Exceſs. It was rightly deliver'd by that Oracle of Wiſdom; *He that loveth Pleaſure ſhall be a poor Man: he that loveth Wine and Oil ſhall not be rich*, Prov. xxi. 17. Which, as it is true in individual Perſons, ſo it is likewiſe as true in Nations and Commonwealths, for the Effect is the ſame in both. The Conſervation of Communities and Bodies Politick, muſt be in the ſame Manner that ſingle Men are preſerved and kept up. The Whole is maintain'd in the like Way that the Parts are. The ſame Virtues that render Families and private Perſons happy, muſt alſo make Kingdoms and Nations thrive and proſper.

IV. *Honour* and *Repute*, and *a good Name*, are the Attendants of Religion and Virtue, and are the genuine Effects and Conſequences of them. The wiſe Man acquaints us, that as *length of Days* is in the right Hand of *Wiſdom* (of which I ſpake before) ſo in her left Hand, are not only *Riches* (of which likewiſe I have treated) but *Honour*, Prov. iii. 16. And of this now I am to diſcourſe, and to ſhew, that it is one of the Gifts and Gratuities which Wiſdom beſtows on her Diſciples and Attendants. Yea, I will make it evident, that even the worſt Men, and ſuch as have little or no Senſe of True Righteouſneſs, pay this Tribute to them. *Potiphar* made *Joſeph Overſeer of his Houſe, and put all that he had into his Hand*, Gen. xxxix. 4. When *Joſeph* was thruſt into Priſon, the Keeper of it honoured and reſpected him; and afterwards we read how *Pharoah* exalted him to the higheſt Dignity in *Egypt*. *Moſes was very great in the Sight of Pharoah's Servants*, Exod. xi. 3. *Mordecai* was led through the City on Horſeback by *Haman*: This his very Enemy was made the Herald to proclaim his Glory, *Eſther* vi. 1. This is an eminent Example to prove, that Bad Men ſhall ſometimes honour the Good even againſt their Wills. *Daniel* was favour'd and honour'd by the Prince of the Eunuchs of *Babylon*, yea, was had in high Eſteem by *Chaldean* and *Perſian* Monarchs themſelves. *John* the *Baptiſt* gain'd great Reſpect and Credit amongſt the Jews. Our bleſſed Saviour himſelf (of whom the forenam'd Perſon was but the Forerunner and Harbinger) *increas'd in Favour with Man*, as well as with God, and even ſome of the vileſt Men pay'd a great Reſpect and Honour to him. We read, that the Apoſtles, and other Holy Men immediately after Chriſt's Aſcenſion, *had favour with all People*, Acts ii. 47. they gain'd Eſteem among ſome of the worſt Men, both Jews and Gentiles. I could go on and ſhew, that many of the Primitive Chriſtians were highly eſteem'd even by their Pagan Perſecutors. Some of thoſe, who at firſt evilly intreated them, did afterwards kindly embrace them: yea, they eſteem'd

* *Quanta, dum deliciis nimiis capitur, ampliſſimi imperii ruina evaſit?* *Val. Max. Lib.* ix. *Cap.* 1.

them as worthy and excellent Perſons. Thus Wiſdom is juſtified not only of her *Children*, but of *Strangers* alſo. *Plutarch* tells us, that the Tyrant *Dionyſius*, who murder'd his Mother, and was the wickedeſt Wretch on the Earth, named one of his Daughters *Virtue*, another *Temperance*, and a third *Juſtice*: Whence it appears, that there are none ſo profligate but they affect the Name of *Virtue*, and imagine ſome Excellency in it; otherwiſe they would not let thoſe they have the greateſt Kindneſs for bear any Badges of it, but they would abhor the very Title of it. And 'tis probable, that thoſe, who outwardly and viſibly ſhew no Favour to the Cauſe of Religion, have, at one time or other, inward Checks for their diſregarding it, and find themſelves compell'd to honour true Holineſs, and the Profeſſors of it in their retir'd Thoughts.

I could prove from other Topicks, that vicious Men do ſome Way bring Repute and Honour to Religion, as firſt, by their Defaming of good Men, for *Woe be to you*, ſaith Chriſt, *when all Men ſpeak well of you*, particularly when this Sort of Men do ſo. It is ſome Kind of Honour then, when good Men are *ſpoken ill of* by ſuch Perſons. Again, by their Lies and Forgeries invented to diſparage Religion and godly Men they ſhew this, that there is a real Goodneſs and Excellency in theſe, and that they find it neceſſary to their wicked Purpoſes to eclipſe and defame theſe. It is indeed paradoxical, but very true, that the Wicked bring Honour to Religion and good Men, by diſhonouring them. Moreover, by hating theſe, they do in an oblique Manner honour them; for it is certain, that this Kind of Men cannot love any Thing that is good, and conſequently they ſhew by their Hatred, that thoſe Perſons and Things are endued with real Goodneſs and Worth. Farther, the Wicked bear an honourable Teſtimony to the Goſpel and good Men, by perſecuting them. The Enmity and Oppoſition, which theſe meet with from the Ungodly, are a clear Conviction of their Excellency. It was a Sign the Goſpel was a very good Thing, becauſe it was perſecuted by *Nero*, ſaid *Tertullian* and *Euſebius*. Thus, Godlineſs is reverenced and honoured even by the moſt wicked Perſons, as well as by thoſe that are good and righteous.

Nor are good Men honour'd only whilſt they are alive, but likewiſe after their Death. *The Righteous ſhall be had in everlaſting Remembrance*, ſaith the Royal Prophet, *Pſal*, cxii. 6. And his Son *Solomon* avers the ſame, *The Memory of the Juſt is bleſſed*, Prov. x. 7. Whence is derived that uſual Expreſſion among Chriſtians, [*of bleſſed or happy Memory*] when they ſpeak of the Deceaſed. Good Men are mention'd with Praiſe, after they are dead; their Name is pronounced with Reſpect and Honour: Which is thus repreſented by the Apocryphal Author, *Wiſd*. viii. 13. *By the means of her* (Wiſdom) *we obtain Immortality, and leave behind us an everlaſting Memorial to them that come after us.* That is, the Name of the Righteous is immortaliz'd and perpetuated by the preceding good Actions of their Lives. Yea, tho' thoſe Actions were than little regarded, yet after Death they are as it were reviv'd, and receive a new Luſtre. For what was [*] ſaid of that pious Father St. *Chryſoſtom*, may be ſaid of many other holy Men, that they are more honour'd after they have left the World than when they were in it. In ſhort, a righteous Man, by his holy Life, ſecures the Duration of his Memory to future Ages with Credit and Renown.

Thus having ſhew'd, *in what Reſpects* Religion and true Piety are *honour'd*, I proceed next to declare the true *Reaſon* and *Ground* of it. Which in Brief is this, there is an intrinſick Worth and Excellency in Holineſs which commands Reſpect, and as 'twere forces Eſteem. Religion is in itſelf praiſe-worthy, and conſequently brings Fame and Credit to the Perſons who heartily entertain it. We do not read, that *John* the *Baptiſt* wrought any Miracle among the People, but it was only the admirable Strictneſs of his Life, and the Beauty of his unfeigned Sanctity, which won him that Repute and Authority which he had among them. This made *Herod* reverence him, as the Evangeliſt particularly obſerves, *Mark* vi. 20. *He feared John, knowing that he was a juſt Man, and a holy.* On this Account it was, that this *burning and ſhining Light* was ſo gaz'd at, and admir'd by all the Jews. This was the Reaſon why our Saviour's Enemies applauded him, and confeſs'd that he ſpoke and did all Things well. And even thoſe, who came to lay hold on him, were ſtruck down with the Majeſty and Glory of thoſe Graces which ſhone in him. When he had expir'd on the Croſs, an honourable Confeſſion was extorted from the Mouth of the *Roman* Centurion who attended

[*] *Μετὰ θάνατον ἐτιμήθη μᾶλλον ἢ περιών.* Socrat. Hiſt. Eccl. Lib. v. Cap. 3.

at

at his Execution, *Truly this was the Son of God*, Matth. xxvii. 4. So in the Servants of Chriſt, their ſincere and impartial Practice of Goodneſs ſtrikes an Awe and Reverence into the worſt Livers, into the moſt depraved and debauced Sort of People. Thus we read, that the Soothſayers of *Alexandria* could not act their magical Pranks, whilſt *Athanaſius* was in that City. When *Attila*, like a Tempeſt of Thunder, broke into the Chriſtian Territories, he was ſtopp'd by the grave Aſpect of a pious Biſhop; and to that commanding Awe, which is in holy Perſons, may be referred, what is * reported concerning a plain illiterate Chriſtian, at the Council of *Nice*; namely, that he baffled and put to Silence a learned Pagan Philoſopher, after he had almoſt been too hard for all the Council beſides. This may be imputed to the Dread and Reverence, which Piety, eſpecially attended with Simplicity, begetteth. There are certain Charms in Holineſs, which ſtrangely work upon the Minds of Men, even of the moſt wicked.

* *Hiſt. Tripart. l.* 2. *c.* 3. *Rufin. Cedren.* & *alii.*

If I ſhould deſcend to *particular Virtues and Graces*, it would evidently appear, that they naturally, and almoſt neceſſarily, conciliate true Honour and Fame. Who can chuſe but reſpect and value that Chriſtian Grace of *Charity* which is ſo uſeful to the World? Who is more honourable than a *merciful* Man? Who will not eſteem and admire the heavenly Endowments of *Meekneſs* and *Humility?* Who will not ſpeak well of *Juſtice* and *Uprightneſs*, of *Truth* and *Faithfulneſs*, which are of Neceſſity in the Life of Man? What can be of greater Repute and Renown than Chriſtian Patience and Fortitude? What are more laudable and praiſeworthy than *Chaſtity*, *Temperance* and *Sobriety?* How truly honourable are *Piety* and *Devotion*, *Zeal* and *Fervency*, in the Service of God? What Reverence ought to be paid to all theſe excellent Accompliſhments, which endear the Poſſeſſors of them to all wiſe and underſtanding Men, and render them acceptable even to the Worſt? Charitable, Humble, Faithful, Temperate, Pious Perſons are honour'd by thoſe, that never follow their Example. Thoſe who, by the Predominancy of their Luſts, are overcome by Vice, yet like and commend thoſe Virtues in others which they practiſe not themſelves.

I may here obſerve it to have been the Sentiment of the very *Pagan* World, that Virtue is the trueſt Honour, and the beſt Nobility. Beſides many expreſs Sayings to this Purpoſe, this was ſignified by that ingenious Contrivance of the Old *Romans*, who order'd that the Temple dedicated to *Virtue*, and that other dedicated to *Honour*, ſhould be ſo ſituated, that there ſhould be no entring into the latter, but by the former. And accordingly both theſe Temples were erected and ſituated in ſuch a Manner, that the Temple of Virtue was the Ante-Temple, or Entry to the Temple of Honour. The uſeful Notion which they would have Men learn from this Situation and Contrivance is this, that Virtue is truly honourable, and that there is no Paſſage to real Honour, but by Virtue. Nothing brings a laſting Repute, but Goodneſs. The Way to Renown and Honour is to honour God, and to walk ſo before him, that our Ways may be pleaſing to him.

On the contrary, Vice and Wickedneſs are not only reproachful and infamous in themſelves, but naturally lead unto Reproach and Infamy. I need only remind you what God once and again threatened to his own People, that if they would be ſo bold and daring as to break his Laws, and diſhonour his Name by their vicious Lives, they ſhould infallibly be a *Hiſſing*, and a *By-word*, and a *Proverb amongſt the Nations* that were round about them; their Reputation ſhould be loſt, their Credit crack'd, and their Names ſerve only for a Title of Infamy and Diſhonour. *When Ephraim ſpake trembling, he exalted himſelf in Iſrael, but when he offended in Baal, he died*, Hoſ. xiii. 1. As much as to ſay, when *Iſrael* threatened Sinners, and ſuffer'd not Vice to go unpuniſh'd, he was reverenced and honoured, but when he turn'd Idolater, and refrain'd not from the moſt heinous Sins, he was deſpis'd and diſregarded, he was of no Account and Eſteem, he was look'd upon as uſeleſs, yea, as a dead Man. Men of wicked Lives are vilified and ſcorn'd, not only by the Good, but ſometimes by the Wicked themſelves. It was that which *Cæſar Borgia*, that vile Politician, complain'd of in his latter Days, that notwithſtanding all his politick Fetches, and plauſible Pretences, he grew ſtill more and more deteſtable to the World. And this is that which other bad Men oftentimes experience; tho' they thrive for a Time, and gain ſome Credit and Applauſe in the World, yet at length their Actions are abhorr'd, and they ſink into

Diſgrace, even among thoſe that are no better than themſelves. It is a falſe Notion which ſome have, that ſome Vices are brave and honourable. They think they ſin with great Credit, and it is commendable and noble to violate ſome Commands of God. So I have read of a People in another Part of the World, who diſtinguiſh'd their Nobles from their Commons, and baſer Rout, by * branding the former in the Forehead with a hot Iron; and this Mark they bore as a Badge of Honour. Semblably Men ſtigmatize, and really diſgrace themſelves, and their Nature by Vice; but who can help it, if they will glory in that their Shame, and boaſt of the Thing which is their greateſt Ignominy? Poverty and Meanneſs, and low Deſcent, and ſuch like, are not Diſgraces (as is commonly thought) but it is *Sin* alone that is ſordid, diſgraceful, and reproachful; it is *this* which is ſcandalous and infamous; it is this which debaſes and degrades the Nature of Man, and even depreſſes it below its proper Species; and it is *this* alone which makes Way for eternal Shame and Diſhonour. But it is True Religion and Godlineſs alone that prevents this, and confers upon Perſons and People that which is one of the moſt deſirable Bleſſings of this World, to wit, a good Name.

Thus I have gone thro' the *Particulars* which I propounded. I have proved, that *Health* and *Long Life*, *Peace* and *Safety*, *Wealth* and *Riches*, *Honour* and *Repute*, are the Companions of Godlineſs; and conſequently, that Religion and a Holy Life are productive of worldly Profit and Advantage, and therefore are truly ſaid, in the Text, to *have the Promiſe of this Life*.

I will now offer to you thoſe plain *Inferences*, which may be deduced from this Doctrine which I have entertain'd you with. Hence, Firſt, thoſe are confuted who think and ſay, that Religion and Holineſs are unprofitable. Secondly, We may aſſuredly conclude, that Irreligion and Ungodlineſs are really unprofitable. Thirdly, Let us be thoroughly perſwaded of theſe great and important Truths, and often meditate on them. Fourthly, Let us be encourag'd by this to be truly holy and righteous.

1. Thoſe are baffled and confuted, who tell us, that Religion is unprofitable, yea, and that it is the great Cauſe of Evil and Miſchief in the World. One of the Cavils againſt the Chriſtians of Old was, that they were † uſeleſs in Affairs of the World, and brought no Advantage to the Commonwealth. In *Diocleſian*'s Reign the general Complaint againſt them was, that they were the Authors of War, Famine, and Peſtilence, and all the other Calamities that befel the Empire in that Time. All theſe were imputed by the Pagans to the permitting and tolerating of the Chriſtian Religion. But this was a falſe and malicious Imputation, and founded on their groſs Miſtake concerning the Chriſtian Religion, for they took it to be a falſe Religion. And here, by the way, we may obſerve the natural Perſwaſion of theſe Perſons (of which I have taken notice before) namely, that a falſe Religion, or (which is the ſame Thing) Irreligion is the Procurer of Calamities, and that outward Felicity and Succeſs are the Recompence of being truly religious. So that 'tis clear, even from the Notion which the deluded Heathens had concerning the Chriſtians of Old, namely, that they were the Cauſe of all the publick Calamities which happen'd, that this Apprehenſion was at the Bottom, that Calamities were caus'd by Irreligion and evil Manners, for they look'd upon the Chriſtians as guilty of both. But that which I directly take notice of here, is the depraved Judgment and vile Deluſion of the Pagans, in imagining that Chriſtianity brought all Evils and Miſchiefs on the World, and that even the Courſe of Nature was diſorder'd and perverted by Reaſon of That.

There have been ſince that time a Sort of Men who have eſpous'd this groſs Miſtake. And I wiſh there were none at preſent who labour under it. Are there not ſome who complain of the Chriſtian Religion, as it is purged from *Popiſh* Corruptions and Superſtitions? Are they not heard to ſay, that Kingdoms and States have received Damage by the *Reformation?* That Cities and Families are conſiderably worſe ſince that time, that neither Nations nor Perſons are in that proſperous Condition which they were in before, *viz.* in the Days of *Popery*. *This*, ſay they, was profitable and beneficial, and things ſucceeded under it very well; but *ever ſince* the World hath grown more diſorder'd, and nothing proſpers and thrives under the Conduct of the Reformed Religion: Rebellions, Seditions, Factions, are the Product of it. I have myſelf been a Witneſs to Complaints of this Sort, not from the Mouths of *Roman* Catholicks, but ſome who profeſs the Proteſtant Religion, yea, ſome who are Guides of the People; they think we are in a worſe Caſe than we were before, and that *Reformed Chriſtianity* is attended with no Benefits and Advantages, yea, proves deſtructive to a great Part of our temporal Welfare. So St. *Paul* was call'd the *Peſt* of the Country, *Acts* xxiv. 5. and ſome of the Chriſtian Brethren were ſaid to be *the Men that turn'd the World upſide down*, Acts xvii. 6. But 'tis certain, that thoſe, who thus repreſented them, had an undoubted Title both to the Name and Thing; for ſuch Perſons are the Plague of the World, and their Irreligion and Wickedneſs overturn the Foundations of Kingdoms and States, as I have amply prov'd.

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* Καὶ τὸ μὲν ἐστίχθαι, εὐγενὲς κέκριται· τὸ δὲ ἄστικτον, ἀγενές. Herodot. (de Thracib.) l. 5. c. 6.

† *Infructuoſi in negotiis. Tertull. Apol. c.* 42.

2. If *Godlineſs* be profitable to all Things, and particularly to our temporal Ends and Deſigns, then we may ſafely and rationally conclude that *Ungodlineſs* is unprofitable and diſadvantageous. Hence perhaps it is, that the * ſame Words in the Holy Tongue ſignify both *Sin* and *Puniſhment*. *If thou doeſt ill* (ſaid God to *Cain*) *Sin* (*i. e.* the Puniſhment of Sin) *lies at the Door*, Gen. iv. 7. The one ſo inſeparably follows the other, that one Word includes both. And I might obſerve to thoſe that are critical, that the † ſame *Hebrew* Verb ſignifies *to ſin*, and *to be deſtroy'd*. And again, that Sin brings *Toil* and *Affliction*, which it ſeems intimated in the Holy Language, where *† one and the ſame Word denotes *Iniquity* and *Labour*, or *Trouble*. I could obſerve the like to you in the * *Greek* and † *Latin* Tongue. But though this may be accidental (as ſome may think) yet the Thing itſelf, which I am offering to you, is moſt certain and unqueſtionable, *viz.* that Sin and Wickedneſs carry temporal and worldly Evil along with them. The Breach of God's Law is attended with all Kinds of outward Calamities. You ſee there are many Perſons who thrive not in the World, they are ſuddenly blaſted and all their Endeavours and Enterprizes come to nought. May we not think this to be one great Cauſe, *viz.* their indulging themſelves in their Sins, and a total Neglect of Religion. Among all their Attempts and Undertakings there is no Care taken of Holineſs: this is utterly ſlighted and forgot by them. And can they then imagine, that their worldly Contrivances and Endeavours ſhall proſper? No; by no Means. Their Neglect of Godlineſs ruins and defeats their Projects for the World. I would not here be miſtaken, as if this Judgment were to be made univerſally, and that we muſt conclude whereever Religion is caſt off, there can be no proſpering in the World. But this is certain, that we cannot err, ſo long as we are conducted by the Sacred Oracles, the Word of God, and accordingly in another Place I have ſhew'd thence, what *Limitations* this Doctrine admits of, and how it is to be underſtood when it is applied to particular Caſes and Perſons. But now at preſent we diſcourſe *in general*, and we are aſſured from Sacred Writ, that Ungodlineſs blaſts Mens worldly Affairs, and renders their earthly and ſecular Enterprizes ſucceſsleſs. Which is confirm'd to us by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, *Your Iniquities have turn'd away theſe Things* (ſpeaking of temporal Bleſſings before) *and your Sins have with-holden good Things from you*, Jer. v. 25. If you pleaſe to conſult the Firſt of *Haggai*, you will find this Truth abundantly eſtabliſh'd. In the 5th and 6th Verſes you have theſe Words, *Now therefore, thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, conſider your Ways*, think ſeriouſly of what I am now to tell you, *Ye have ſown much, and bring in little: ye eat, but have not enough: ye drink, but ye are not fill'd with Drink: ye cloth you, but there is none warm: and he that earneth Wages, earneth Wages to put it into a Bag with Holes.* All which is ſaid to expreſs this one Thing, that they did not thrive; nothing that they did proſpered. And again, *v.* 9. *Ye look'd for much, and lo it came to little, and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it*, or according to the Original, *I blow'd it away*; I blaſted all their Hopes and Projects of Gain. The Reaſon of which is aſſign'd in the Words, *Becauſe of my Houſe that is waſt, and ye run every Man to his own Houſe*; as much as to ſay, you neglect me, and mind yourſelves only: you take no Care of Religion, but your Thoughts and Endeavours tend altogether toward your worldly and ſecular Profit. This is not the Way to proſper; ye take a Courſe rather to ruin yourſelves, and to bring a Curſe on all your Undertakings. Inſtead of temporal Benefits you may expect Judgments of that Kind, as it fol-

lows

* *Rang*, *Ragnah*, *Chattah ſignificant* Peccatum & Pœnam.

† *Aſham, peccare, devaſtari ſeu deſtrui.*

*† *Aven, iniquitas & labor.*

* Κακία, *malitia, afflictio,* πονηρὸς ἀπόνος.

† *Malum ſignificat* Culpam & Pœnam. *Noxa item. Forſan etiam Angl.* Sin *a* σίνω *noceo, vel* σῖνος *nocumentum.*

lows in the next Words, *Therefore the Heaven over you is ſtay'd from Dew, and the Earth is ſtay'd from her Fruit, and I call'd for a Drought on the Land, on the Mountains, on the Corn, on that which the Ground bringeth forth, upon Men, upon Cattle, and upon all the Labour of your Hands:* that is, an univerſal Judgment is due to you for your Miſcarriages. Thus we muſt never think to receive any Advantage by walking in thoſe Ways, which are contrary to God's Laws; for however we may flatter ourſelves, we ſhall find no Profit in the Commiſſion of Sin. *The unfruitful Works of Darkneſs* are a fit Deciphering of all *Vice*, which hath not the leaſt Advantage to commend it. But if it bear any *Fruit*, 'tis bitter, poiſonous, and mortal. It is this that provokes the incenſed Majeſty of Heaven to change Summers into Winters, and Winters again into Summers; to make the Heavens Braſs, and the Earth Iron; to render a fruitful Land barren and forſaken; to ſpoil the Frame of Mens Bodies, and to introduce all Kinds of Maladies and Diſtempers; to diſorder and diſcompoſe the Frame of all Things. This changeth a flouriſhing Kingdom into a Wilderneſs: this turns our Liberty into Bondage, our Plenty into Scarcity, our Peace into War, and our Proſperity into the moſt deplorable and wretched Condition. Call your Sins then to Remembrance this Day: reflect on God's Judgments, and read your Folly and Diſobedience in them. The ſad Occurrences of this Nation are too plain a Proof of what I have been inſiſting on. From our Sins proceeded that *Bloody Sword* which hath been drawn, and done Execution in this Land, when a *Civil War* heretofore raged in our Bowels. *Hence* was the *Mortal Contagion*, which not long ſince ſpread itſelf through the Land, and ſwept away ſuch vaſt Numbers of its Inhabitants. *Hence* was the *Fatal Fire* that conſumed our Capital City, and laid its Habitations waſte. *Hence* is the *deadly Conſpiracy* which hath undermined our Religion, our Laws, our Liberties, and which, to this Hour, is contriving our Overthrow. Hence are the expenſive and bloody *Wars* which we are involved in, at this very Day. Wherefore,

3. Let us be thoroughly perſwaded of this important Truth which I have been treating of. Fix it on your Minds, lodge it in your Memories, bear it about you where-ever you go, or whatſoever Buſineſs you are engaged in. Think ſeriouſly of this undoubted Propoſition, that Godlineſs is attended even with temporal Advantages, and that Irreligion and Impiety derive all temporal Evils on Perſons and Nations. It will be of great Uſe in your Lives to be fully convinc'd of this. I beſeech you therefore entertain it as an undeniable Maxim, eſpecially ſince I have made it good, and demonſtrated the Truth and Reality of it by ſo *many* Arguments. Certainly, it will have great Influence upon you then to be reſolv'd of this, that you conſult your ſecular Advantage whenever you ſtudy to be religious and virtuous, that by being good and righteous you advance your worldly Welfare and Happineſs. Read the Character of the Bleſſed Man in the Firſt *Pſalm*, he is one *who walks not in the Counſel of the Ungodly, nor ſtands in the Way of Sinners, nor ſits in the Seat of the Scornful; but his Delight in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he meditate Day and Night.* Some worldly Man would ſay, he could then have no Time to get Riches, he could not have Leiſure to attend ſecular Buſineſs, and therefore it is impoſſible he ſhould thrive. But you read the contrary in the next Verſe, *Whatſoever he doth ſhall proſper.* The more Time he lays out in the Service of God, and doing his Duty, the greater Succeſs he may expect in his worldly Affairs. Fix it then on your Minds, that the Hours which you ſpend in religious and holy Exerciſes will be really profitable to you, that your ſecular Affairs ſhall ſucceed the better for them. If you ſerve God ſincerely, you take the Way to thrive. See then here the right Method of proſpering in the World. Religion is the Way to outward and worldly Happineſs. Be perſwaded then, I intreat you, to think and firmly believe that it is really thus, that Religion is a real Income and Revenue, an advantageous and gainful Employ, an Exerciſe that profiteth very much. Aſſure your ſelves, that you cannot be hurt, if you make Religion your Buſineſs. It is controverted in the *Talmud*, whether a Man when he is at Prayer, and a Serpent comes and bites him by the Heel, may leave off praying, and pauſe for a Time, to ſhake off the Serpent? *Rabbi Tankum* anſwers negatively; "for there was a certain Man, " *ſaith he*, who being praying, and a Serpent ſeizing on him, left not off pray- " ing, and the Serpent fell down of his own Accord ſtark dead, and the Man re-

“ ceiv'd no Hurt.” The *Jewiſh* Doctors have other Traditions and Sayings to this Purpoſe. “ The burnt Fleſh and Fat of the Sacrifices never ſent forth any ill “ Scent or unwholeſome Exhalations. No Woman ever miſcarried with the Smell “ of the Sacrifices. No Serpent or Scorpion ever hurt any one at *Jeruſalem*.” There are ſeveral ſuch high Strains of the *Hebrew* Doctors, but their Meaning is good; and it is no other than this, that none ever took Harm from his Religion; that none ever fared the worſe for ſerving God; that we ſhall ever be indamaged by doing our Duty, and by being good. Piety never proved prejudicial to any Perſon, but it is our greateſt Security and Protection. *Do that which is good, and no Evil ſhall touch you.* It is an Apocryphal Saying, but undeniably true. That which I requeſt of you then is this, that you would be thoroughly perſwaded of this great Verity, and conſtantly call it to mind, and rely upon it as the greateſt Certainty.

4. Be deterred by this Doctrine from the Commiſſion of Sin, and be encouraged to be righteous and godly. A Man may uſe the ſame Argument againſt Sin, and the Commiſſion of it, that he would make uſe of to perſwade Men to avoid, as much as they can, Diſeaſes and Maladies, namely, becauſe they are painful and dangerous, and often end in Death. So Sin is the greateſt Diſeaſe, and (as I have ſhew'd already) brings bodily Diſeaſes with it. Many Men have found this by Exprience; they have been robb'd of their Health and Eaſe, their Reſt and Quiet, by their Sins; they have felt unexpreſſible Pains and Tortures; they have expos'd themſelves to infinite Hazards and Dangers, even to eternal Death and Miſery. If Sin then be ſo far from being profitable, that it even proves perillous and deſtructive, you have the greateſt Reaſon imaginable to hate and avoid it. And on the other Side, you have as powerful an Incitement to Godlineſs from the Conſideration of the vaſt Advantage which accompanies it. I confeſs, there are nobler Invitations to Godlineſs than this: the inward Worth and Excellency of Piety, and the future Rewards which follow it. Theſe are of a high Nature. But God is pleas'd to excite us to his Service, and our Duty, by *all Kinds* of Motives; and ſeeing he hath placed us in this World, and made Fleſh as well as Spirit to be the Ingredients of our Nature, in ſo much that we ſtand in need of being furthered in the chearful Exerciſe of our Religion, by the Enjoyment of Health, Peace, Plenty, and other earthly Bleſſings; ſeeing it is thus, it will be found rational, and ſuitable to our Natures to be encourag'd by theſe Things, to the more ready diſcharging of our Duty. It ſhall not be ſaid, that we eſpouſe Religion without a Dowry, that we ſerve God for nought, that it is no Profit to us to obey his Laws. We have the good Things of this World ſet before us as our Reward. Let this ſtir us up to all virtuous and holy Undertakings. We ſhall find our Intereſt in our Duty. We muſt neceſſarily love and obey God, if we hate not ourſelves. We muſt be good Men even by the Maxims of common Prudence and Policy. We are oblig'd to be religious for our own Advantage. We are the beſt Friends to ourſelves by being righteous.

If this grand Truth were more prevalent on the Minds of Men, Religion would flouriſh in the World, and the Lives of Men would be a Grace to it. I have endeavour'd to contribute toward this by inculcating this Truth upon you, and by perſwading you to the hearty Belief of it. This being once cordially entertain'd, you cannot but live holy and godly Lives. If you be really perſwaded, that a Holy Life is advantageous to you, as to the Things of this World, you will ſo far conſult your temporal Good as to lead ſuch a Life. As you deſire the Conveniencies, Accommodations and Enjoyments of this World, ſee that you mind the Concerns of another. As you wiſh for a Bleſſing with what you have, as you are deſirous to proſper in your worldly Affairs, take care that you ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, that you conſcientiouſly practiſe your Duty, and conform yourſelf to the Divine Laws. If you would have the Bleſſings of Health, Peace, Plenty, Honour, and all other temporal good Things conferr'd upon you, take this Method, and you ſhall not be denied them. Make one a Motive to the other; think how reaſonable it is to love and practiſe Godlineſs, which is ſo profitable to you. Imagine the great God of Heaven ſpeaking to you as *Moſes* did once to the *Iſraelites*, *What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his Ways, and to love him, and to ſerve the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart and with all thy Soul, to keep the*

Commandments of the Lord, and his Statutes which I command thee this Day for thy Good? Deut. x. 12, 13. This is a forcible Engagement to obey the divine Commands, that they are *for our Good*, for our real *Profit* and *Welfare*, This ſhould quicken us to the Ways of *Holineſs*, that it is real Gain in all States and Conditions of Life, that it is *profitable* to all Ranks and Degrees, all Profeſſions and Employments of Men, to Kings and their Subjects, to Miniſters and their People, to Men of Buſineſs and Traffick, and to thoſe alſo that live a ſtudious and contemplative Life: that it is *profitable* in Courts, Cities, and Country Retirements; that it is *profitable* in all the Ages of Men, Childhood, Youth, Manhood, and Old Age. In Brief, which way ſoever you turn your Eye, Godlineſs is uſeful and ſerviceable, exceeding beneficial and advantageous. Now then, my Brethren, do you ſtand in need of Perſwaſions, to mind that which your own *Intereſt* and *Happineſs* thus conduct you to? Do you want Arguments to move you to conſult your real Profit and Emolument? Muſt you be call'd upon, and urged, and ſollicited to be kind to yourſelves? It is not uſually ſo with you. Why ſhould it be ſo now? What is the Reaſon that you do not attend to your Profit and Advantage? Would you live *peaceably* and *ſecurely?* This is the beſt Courſe you can take in order to it. Would you purchaſe a *Good Name?* this is the only Way. Would you have ſuch a Meaſure of *Wealth* as is fitting for you? this will furniſh you with it. Would you *live long* to enjoy all theſe? this alſo will procure you that Bleſſing. Or if there be any other outward and temporal good Thing which you deſire, it ſhall be added unto you, if you make Religion your main Buſineſs.

THE EASINESS AND PLEASANTNESS OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

Matth. xi. 30.

For my Yoke is eaſy, and my Burden is light.

THESE Words are an evangelical *Paradox*, as having in them ſomething above the Reach of common Apprehenſion, and yet being undoubtedly true. They ſeem to carry in them a Contradiction, yet they are infallibly certain. Here is a *Yoke*, but it is an *eaſy* one; here is a *Burden*, but it is *light*. There needs nothing elſe to vouch the Truth, Reality, and Conſiſtency of this ſeeming Oppoſition, but the Authority of him who deliver'd it, who is Truth itſelf. It concerns us then to conſult the firſt Occaſion of our Saviour's Speaking theſe Words. He had belike met with little Succeſs in his Miniſtry hitherto; for Impenitence and Unbelief had hardened the Hearts of moſt of thoſe who had been his Auditors. But he thankfully acknowledgeth the Goodneſs of his Heavenly Father, that this Infidelity and Refuſal of the Goſpel were not univerſal; that they had not overſpread the Minds and Manners of all thoſe Perſons to whom the evangelical Grace was tendered. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, becauſe thou haſt hid theſe Things from the Wiſe and Prudent, and haſt reveal'd them to Babes*, ver. 25. And thus our Bleſſed Redeemer, who was always deſirous of promoting the Salvation of Mankind, proceeds to invite theſe Babes, theſe humble and ſubmiſſive Souls to receive the Offers of Grace, and heartily to embrace the Chriſtian Religion, whereof he was the firſt Founder: *Come unto me*, (ſaith he) *all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you Reſt*, ver. 28. Which Words, beſides that they are an Invitation, are likewiſe an unerring Character of ſuch who were to be eſteemed Chriſt's Diſciples. They muſt be ſenſible of their Sins, their Conſciences muſt be preſs'd and burden'd with the ſerious Conſideration of the heinous Nature of their Tranſgreſſions. Theſe are the Perſons, who may *come* to Chriſt, and find *Reſt*. Nay, he commands them, as they tender the Welfare of their Souls, to come unto him, and to *take his Yoke upon them*, ver. 29. Which Injunction ſome think to be an Alluſion to the Trade, wherein our Saviour wrought ſometimes in his Minority, *viz.* the *Making of Yokes*, which was Part of the Carpenters or Smiths Employment. And we are told, that [*] in the antient Primitive Times, there was hung up ſometimes in the Churches and Oratories a little ſilver Yoke, in Remembrance of this Command of Chriſt, *Take my Yoke upon you.* Or, it is probable our Saviour here uſes the Phraſe which was common among the *Jews*, eſpecially the [†] *Rabbinical* Writers, who uſed this Expreſſion of *Taking the Yoke upon one* to ſignify Submiſſion and Obedience. As, it is certain, our Saviour at other Times complied with the Speech and Expreſſion of the Country, and made Uſe of the known and proverbial Sayings among them, ſo here he doth the ſame: And when he bids his Diſciples *take his Yoke upon them*, the true Meaning is, that they ſhould be obedient and ſubject to him, that they ſhould ſubmit to his Laws, and reſign themſelves to his Will and Pleaſure. But leſt they ſhould have objected thus: It is true, O Bleſſed Maſter, becauſe thou commandeſt us (if for no other Reaſon) it is our Duty to take thy Yoke upon us, and to follow exactly the Rules of that Religion which thou haſt revealed: But, alas! we are infirm and ſinful Creatures, a Compound of Fleſh and Spirit, we are weak and crazy, and ſhall never be able to bear that Yoke. He, to anſwer, or rather anticipate this Objection, firſt propounds them his own Example, *Learn of me*, ver. 9. and then in the Words, which I have read to you, he encourages them to take his Yoke upon them, by acquainting them with the true Nature and Quality of it, *For my Yoke is eaſy*, &c. As if he had ſaid, Chriſtianity, and the Diſcharging of all the Offices of it, are not ſo harſh as you imagine; its Laws and Precepts are not ſo ſoure and ſevere as you conjecture. All thoſe who take my Yoke upon them, and humbly ſubmit to the Obedience of my Laws, ſhall find that I am no unmerciful Task-maſter, no cruel Exactor of Performances, where Poſſibility and Power are wanting. It is a groundleſs Prejudice which hath poſſeſs'd Mens Minds, that my Inſtitution is grievous and burdenſome; but if you make Trial of it, you will conclude the contrary, and own that it is very acceptable and pleaſant.

Thus, in general, you ſee the Scope and Deſign of the Words, which is no other than this, to reconcile Religion to our Minds, to preſent us with the Beauties and Delights, the Charms and Raviſhments of an evangelical Life, to ſhow our Way to Heaven with Roſes, to repreſent Chriſtianity as the moſt delightful Thing imaginable; ſo that none may be deterred from embracing it, but that all may be perfectly enamour'd with it. And, for the Promoting of this bleſſed Deſign, I will undertake, from theſe Words of our Saviour, to inſiſt upon this uſeful Obſervation.

That the Chriſtian Religion is a Doctrine moſt eaſy, a State moſt pleaſant and delightful.

But when I ſay Chriſtianity is *eaſy* and *pleaſant*, let me premiſe this, for the right Stating and Bounding the Senſe of our Saviour's Words, that I mean not any of theſe three Things; Firſt, It is not *lazy and idle:* Secondly, It is not *looſe and licentious:* Thirdly, It is not *gay and ſenſual.*

Firſt, I ſay, it is not lazy and idle. It is a *Yoke* altho' eaſy, and a *Burden* tho' light. It conſiſts not in bare Wiſhes and ineffectual Deſires. If theſe could have amounted to Chriſtianity, many Men had been now in Heaven, who are never like to ſee that Place. Nor is it made up of fair Words and Speeches: *The Kingdom of God* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *is not in Word, but in Power*, 1 Cor. iv. 20. Neither is it placed in Phariſaical Pretences, and a Shew of Piety. Chriſt aſſureth us, that *not every one who ſaith unto him, Lord, Lord*, (*i. e.* who pretends to own Chriſt for his Lord and Maſter) *ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of his Father which is in Heaven*, Matth. vii. 21. Nor doth it conſiſt, laſtly, in bare Actions and external Performances, devoid of an inward Spring and Principle. *Opus Operatum*, the mere outward Performance of religious Duties, ſatisfies thoſe of the Church of *Rome*, but it muſt not content you. No: True Religion is a Mixture of Words and Thoughts, of inward Principles and outward Actions. It is compleat and perfect, full and entire; it contains nothing in it, which is empty and ſuperficial; it finds us a great deal of Work, and will not ſuffer us to ſit idle and lazy. That you might not imagine Chriſtianity is of another Nature, our Saviour bids *us take his Yoke upon us*, i. e. ſuppreſs and ſubjugate all our ſinful Deſires, and bring our unruly Wills into Subjection, and wholly ſubmit ourſelves to the Commands of the Goſpel; which cannot be done where Sloth and Idleneſs bear a Sway.

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[*] *Vide Tho. Holyoke Dictionar. Lat. in verbo* Jugulum.

[†] *In Seder Tephilloth. In Maſſecheth Beracoth*, &c.

Secondly, Therefore, I add, that though the Chriſtian Religion be eaſy, and light, and pleaſant, yet it is not any Ways looſe and licentious. The Eaſineſs of Chriſtianity is not deſtroy'd by introducing of ſtrict Rules; to regulate our Actions by Religion, is ſomething that is according to a Rule, or elſe we could not tell what it is; for if we were not bounded and limited by a Rule, no Action could be reckon'd as unlawful; but what our inordinate Wills and corrupted Appetites dictated to us, would be as lawful as any thing ſuggeſted to the contrary. But God is pleaſ'd to wall us in with certain Laws, —— *Quas ultra citraque nequit conſiſtere Rectum:* and we cannot leap over theſe without offending God, and wounding our Conſciences. And indeed, if we rightly conſider it, it is our great Happineſs that we are thus reſtrain'd, and are not left to the Suggeſtions of our own depraved Minds. This Impriſonment and Confinement is our greateſt Liberty and Freedom. The Eaſineſs of Chriſtianity doth not mean any ſuch Thing as Wantonneſs and Extravagancy. We muſt not, becauſe Chriſt tells us that his Yoke is eaſy, therefore fondly imagine, that we have a Liberty to ſin, granted us under the Goſpel. This is to be *without any Yoke* at all. This is a falſe and a dangerous Gloſs on the Text, and fits no Man's Mouth, but that of a *Ranter* or *Libertine*, who thinks he may ſin abundantly, becauſe Grace hath abounded.

Thirdly, Though Chriſtianity be eaſy and pleaſant, yet it is no gaudy and gayiſh Thing, on Purpoſe to pleaſe the Eye, and gratify the ſenſual Appetite, and to tickle and delight the Fancy. It is not made to pleaſe Children, who are moſt taken with what is gay and fine; but it is framed to agree with the rational Deſires and ſolid Judgments of underſtanding Men. It is the Sign of an adulterate Religion to be made up altogether of Ornaments and Bravery. Not that I would have you to fancy Religion to be ſqualid and ſordid, and devoid of Decency and Comelineſs. No: it may commendably make Uſe of theſe; but it places not the Subſtance of Religion in them. In ſhort, Religion looks beſt, when it is attired like a grave Matron, and not like a gaudy Strumpet.

Thus hitherto I have proceeded in *a negative Way*, and have let you ſee, what is not meant by the Eaſineſs and Pleaſantneſs of Chriſt's Yoke. In the next Place I will ſhew you, in *a poſitive Manner*, how Chriſt's Yoke is eaſy and pleaſant. And this will appear, if you conſider it, 1. *Relatively or comparatively* 2. If you view it in its *abſolute and abſtract Nature*.

Firſt, I might demonſtrate to you, that Chriſt's Yoke, or the evangelical Law, is exceeding eaſy, if you take it *comparatively*.

1. If it be compared with the *Covenant of Works*, which entail'd all Juſtification and Salvation upon the Works of the *Law*, which made exact and perfect Obedience the Condition of Life and Happineſs. Whereas, the evangelical Diſpenſation is *a Covenant of Grace and Favour*, and (as you ſhall hear afterwards) connives at our Weakneſſes and Imperfections.

2. I might compare Chriſt's Yoke with *that of the Jewiſh Ceremonies*, which is ſtiled by St. *Paul*, *the Yoke of Bondage*, Gal. v. 1. and by St. *Peter*, *a Yoke which neither they* (*i. e.* the People of that Age) *nor their Fathers were able to bear*, Acts xv. 10. Gnol Torah, *the Yoke of the Law*, was an uſual Phraſe among the *Jewiſh* Writers; and it was a trite Saying among them, *There is no Burden ſo heavy as that of the Law.* Which, if it be applied to the ceremonial Part of the Law, is evidently true; for great was the Slavery of the *Jewiſh* Nation under their legal Polity; they were overburden'd with ceremonious Obſervances, and their Religion was not only coſtly, but painful. It was coſtly and expenſive to the *People*, and it

was toilſome and painful to the *Prieſts* and *Levites*; therefore you read, * that theſe were diſmiſs'd from ſerving at the Altar, when they came to be fifty Years of Age. That Part of the prieſtly Office was a laborious Work, and more fitter for youthful and ſtrong Perſons, than for thoſe who were ſtricken in Years. In Reſpect therefore of this Yoke, Chriſt may be thought to have utter'd theſe Words to the *Jews*, *My Yoke is eaſy*, my Service is perfect Freedom. Stand faſt therefore, in this Liberty wherewith I have made you free, and be not entangled again with a Yoke of Bondage.

3. You may compare Chriſt's Yoke with *that of Sin and Satan*, and find the Former to be unſpeakably eaſy in Reſpect of the Latter. For what Difficulties and Hardſhips doth the Sinner meet with? How uneaſy and troubleſome is every Vice to him? How miſerable a Slave is that Man who is in the Devil's Service? How many Contradictions and Contrarieties are there in Sinning? And how diſturbing and diſtracting are theſe? As it happens among Soldiers, Fellow-Soldiers of the ſame Band, who, though they agree in this to fight the common Enemy, yet ſometimes are ſeen to fight with one another for the Spoil; ſo is it in the Soul, and its fleſhly Deſires, which, though they all oppoſe Virtue, yet ſometimes fall out with one another. One unruly and heady Paſſion thwarteth another; one Sin is contrary and croſs to another. Thus Pride and Covetouſneſs, and Luxury and Covetouſneſs oppoſe one another, and ſome other Sins cannot agree. We read of *the Sinner that goeth two Ways*, Eccl. ii. 12. But there are ſome Sinners that *go many Ways*, and all thoſe Ways are croſs and contradictory: The poor Men are pull'd and hauled by their different Luſts, they are plagued by their various Deſires, they puniſh and torment themſelves with their contrary Vices. But waving this Conſideration, I could let you ſee, that Sin is grievous and afflictive, *Firſt*, *in the very Commiſſion of it*. To inſtance in a few Particulars, what Pain and Trouble is there in *Impatience?* What Torment is there in *Diſcontent?* It is impoſſible to imagine any Thing of Senſuality and Gratification in either of theſe. What Torture and Reſtleſſneſs is there in *Anger*, *Revenge*, and *Malice?* What a Plague is *Envy* to a Man? (As *Iſocrates* ingeniouſly ſaid, † *This is the only Good that befals an envious Perſon, that no greater Evil can happen to him.*) And a *Greek* Father truly calls this Paſſion *† a moſt unjuſt, and yet a very juſt and righteous Paſſion, becauſe it is deſervedly the greateſt Puniſhment the Sinner can have inflicted on him. What Diſeaſe and Diſquiet is there in *Pride* and *Ambition?* What Diſturbance and Anguiſh is there in *immoderate Love of the World*, and covetous Deſires) the Apoſtle having told us, that thoſe who addict themſelves to this Vice * *fall into a Snare* (wherein they are very uneaſy and reſtleſs,) and † *pierce themſelves through with many Sorrows*)? How vexatious and frightful, how diſcompoſed and diſtracted is the Man's Mind, who is overcome of theſe Paſſions? And as for Murder, Oppreſſion, Violence, and other flagitious Vices, we have an in-bred Abhorrence of them, and our Natures recoil at the very Deſigning and Projecting of them. Secondly, Sin is heavy and uneaſy *after the Commiſſion of it*, witneſs a guilty Conſcience which is its common Attendant. Fear and Horror, Shame and Diſgrace, Bluſhing and Confuſion of Face, Anxiety and Inquietude, Regret and Remorſe, black and diſmal Thoughts, ſorrowful Reflections and a wounded Spirit, are the juſt Rewards of evil and unjuſt Actions. Beſides, that ſome Sins are followed with bodily Diſtempers and corporal Plagues; they produce Sickneſs and Weakneſs; they beget Pain and Torment; they vitiate the Brain; they impair the Senſes; they corrupt the Marrow; they infect the Blood, and they diſorder the whole Craſis of the Body. And *after this Life*, Sin is followed with a tedious and unſupportable Torment. As Sin carries along with it Puniſhment here, ſo it meets with eternal Vengeance hereafter, in the Regions of Devils and damned Souls.

4. I might ſhew you, that Chriſtianity is an eaſy Yoke, if compared with thoſe *ſeveral Yokes* which are put upon Mens Necks; I mean thoſe different Inſtitutions, Schemes, and Models of Religion, which the World hath invented, and gained Proſelytes to. The Doctrine, which Chriſt hath deliver'd to his Diſciples, is far more eaſy and pleaſant, and is attended with fewer Difficulties than any Inſtitution, Way, or Worſhip, whether it be *Pagan*, or *Mahometan*,

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* Numb. viii. 25.

† Τῷ φθόνῳ τοῦτο μόνον πρόσεστιν ἀγαθὸν, ὅτι μέγιστον καλὸν τοῖς ἔχουσιν ἐστί.

*† Ἀδικώτατον ἅμα καὶ δικαιότατον πάθος.

* 1 Tim. vi. 9.

† Ver. 10.

or any other whatſoever, which is different from that of *Chriſtians.* But it would take up too much Time to proſecute ſuch a Task as this; and, indeed, I ſhould thereby rather evince the Uneaſineſs and Inconveniences of *other Religions,* than demonſtrate to you the Eaſineſs and Pleaſure which attend the *Chriſtian,* which is my main Buſineſs at preſent.

I chooſe therefore to proceed to the *abſolute Proof* of the Propoſition *i. e.* to ſhew you, that Chriſtianity, as it is conſider'd in itſelf, and in its own Nature, with the neceſſary Appendices belonging to it, is eaſy, ſweet, and pleaſant. That it is ſo will appear from theſe following Conſiderations, (if not from every one of them ſeverally, yet without Doubt from all of them jointly). And the

I. Conſideration is this, that Chriſtianity is fitted to the meaneſt Capacities and ſhalloweſt Apprehenſions; it is a Religion that is plain and intelligible, and all Perſons are capable of receiving it. The *Heathens* dealt in dark Oracles; the *Jewiſh* Temple had a Veil; the *Turkiſh* Moſques are purpoſely darkened, and moſt Religions have affected unneceſſary Obſcurities; but *Chriſtianity* is naked and open, clear and perſpicuous, and reſolves the Difficulties which could not be anſwered by Men of other Religions. Its Doctrines are plain and obvious, from which none can err and apoſtatize, but of wilful Obſtinacy. And as for the Duties required in it, we have clear and undeniable Reaſon for them all, and they lie plain before us, and we cannot miſtake them, unleſs we blind our Eyes on Purpoſe. What elſe is the Meaning of thoſe Words, in *Iſa.* xxxv. 8. which ſpeak of the Times of the Goſpel? *A Highway ſhall be there, and a Way, and it ſhall be call'd the Way of Holineſs.* —— *the way-faring Men, tho' Fools, ſhall not err therein.* What elſe is the Meaning of thoſe Words of God (by the ſame Prophet) to his Miniſters, even the Miniſters of the Goſpel, in Iſa. lxii. 10. *Go through, go through the Gates, prepare ye the Way of the People: caſt up, caſt up the Highway, gather out the Stones, lift up a Standard for the People.* All Obſtacles and Impediments are to be remov'd, and a Standard is ſet up, not to proclaim War, and bid Defiance, but that they may know whither to repair, and that they might not miſtake, but eaſily learn their Duty. As for the Truths which are generally ſpread through the Holy Book of God, and, more particularly, thoſe which are derived to us from Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, and Evangeliſts, and which are frequently inculcated by them as Matter of our hearty Aſſent and Belief; many of theſe carry a native Light with them, and beſides that, they are render'd clear and perſpicuous, by undeniable Proofs and irrefragable Demonſtrations. The New Teſtament being put into our Hands * we are to look for no further Diſcoveries. Chriſt, the Teſtator, made this *his Laſt* Will and Teſtament. We have here the whole Sum and Complement of our Faith. And it is plainly laid before us, it is clear and evident upon a due Propounding and Urging it. I deny not, that there are great *Myſteries* in our Holy Religion, which far ſurpaſs our ordinary Conceptions, and the Reach of our natural Reaſon, but we are oblig'd to entertain and embrace them, becauſe they are *plainly* and *expreſsly* deliver'd to us in the Holy Scriptures, that is, the Things themſelves (tho' not the Manner of them) are ſo deliver'd. Thus far they are intelligible, clear, and evident, and we need deſire no more. But as for the other Parts of the evangelical Doctrines, after they are once diſcover'd to us, they contain no Difficulty or Myſtery in them, but are eaſily adjuſted to our Underſtandings and Reaſons. Such are theſe, a being ſenſible of our natural Depravity, Impotency, and Inability, of our Obnoxiouſneſs to the divine Wrath; the Neceſſity of having an Attonement made for us, and of being furniſh'd with ſupernatural Aid and Aſſiſtance; a Believing in Jeſus Chriſt, and relying on his Merits; an entire Loving of God, and of our Brethren for his Sake; a deſigning God's Glory in all our Actions; a being content with what Providence allotteth us; ſincere Endeavouring to pleaſe God, and doing all the Good we can in the World; breathing after Heaven, and deſiring to depart, and to be with Chriſt. Now theſe, and the like Things, are plain, and eaſy to be underſtood, and the meaneſt Capacities may ſoon reach them. It is a plain Caſe, and every one is able to judge of it, whether it be better, by doing what God bids us, to make ſure of eternal Happineſs, or, by liſtening to the Devil, to purchaſe everlaſting Miſery. You need not torture your Brains to comprehend this, or any other neceſſary Matter which belongs to your Religion; for ſo far as it is neceſſary and ſubſtantial, it is plain and intelligible; and he that brings a good Heart, will eaſily apprehend it. The Rules of Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs are perſpicuous and eaſy, and need no Curioſity or Study. Here are no Intrigues and Labyrinths of Logick to go through; here is no ſweating Work for quaint Criticks; there are no *Keri* and *Ketib* in Chriſtianity, no *Variæ Lectiones*, in the Book of the Goſpel, to puzzle and confound us. And, indeed, it muſt needs be thus, for our Religion being of univerſal Concernment, it was neceſſary it ſhould be fitted to the meaneſt Conceptions. It was deſigned for the Good and Happineſs of all Men, learned and unlearned, wiſe or ſimple; therefore, it muſt be plain and intelligible; it muſt be comprehended by Men of the meaneſt Capacity, by all Perſons that have the Uſe of Reaſon. Were it myſterious and abſtruſe, and conſiſted in Diſputes and Controverſies, none but great Scholars and hard Students, and Men of great Parts, could attain to it, and then what would become of poor illiterate People? But theſe, as well as the others, are provided for here. For if Chriſtianity be the Concern of all, then it muſt be underſtood by all; and if it muſt be underſtood by all, it muſt be eaſy, becauſe ſome are of weak Capacities. There is a ſtrait Road before them, and they cannot miſs it. Great Wit and Parts are not required for the Finding of it. Chriſtianity is not Matter of profound Learning, as appears from our Saviour's Chooſing his Diſciples and Apoſtles, from amongſt ſimple Fiſhermen and ignorant Mechanicks. This tells us, that Clerkſhip is no neceſſary ingredient in Chriſtianity, and that eternal Bleſſedneſs is not the Purchaſe of ſubtle Heads, but of honeſt Hearts. The Things of the Chriſtian Religion, which have Reference to our Practice, and which moſt nearly concern us, are clear as the Sun, and written in ſuch legible Characters, that he, who runs, may read them. There is a plain Way to Happineſs, and the moſt ſimple and unlearned are capable of knowing it. In ſhort, Chriſtianity is eaſy to be underſtood, and all Matters, of neceſſary Belief and Practice, are obvious and intelligible. This firſt Conſideration is ſufficient, (if I ſhould add no more) to prove the Propoſition I undertook to make good. But there are other Ways to convince you more fully of this Truth. Therefore,

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* *Nobis curioſitate opus non eſt poſt Chriſtum Jeſum, nec inquiſitione poſt Evangelium. Cum credimus, nihil deſideramus ultra credere. Hoc enim prius credimus, non eſſe quod ultra credere debeamus. Tertul. Præſcript. adv. hær. cap.* 8.

II. If we take a Survey of the ſeveral *particular Graces* and *Duties* of Chriſtianity, we ſhall find that they are ſweet and pleaſant, agreeable and delectable in their own Nature. Every Action of the Chriſtian Religion is accompanied with a marvellous Chearfulneſs; the very Performance of them is hugely delightful and ſatisfactory. *Faith*, that eminent Grace of the Goſpel, is pregnant with Eaſe and Pleaſure; and accordingly you may obſerve, that, in the Stile of Holy Scripture, *Faith* is a Word ſometimes for all Virtue and Holineſs, becauſe it facilitateth and perfecteth all. This fixeth our Eyes upon the Redeemer of Souls, who came to recover loſt Man, and to reduce him to a State of Quietneſs and ſolid Felicity. By this it is, that we apply to ourſelves the Merits of our Lord, and participate of all thoſe Privileges, which were deſigned by a merciful God to miſerable and undone Men. By this, we eaſily get the Conqueſt over the moſt powerful Oppoſers and Enemies of our Salvation: *This is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith*. *Hope*, which is the next evangelical Grace, is the Anchor of our Minds, in the Midſt of the greateſt Storms and Tempeſts, which we meet with in this unſettled World. This faſteneth us to the Rock of Ages; this refreſhes our Minds with the great and precious Promiſes, and with the Expectation of thoſe infinite Rewards, which are laid up for them who truſt in God. *Charity* is another Grace, which, of all the excellent Attire of a Chriſtian, ſits moſt eaſily upon him. Charity (as the Apoſtle deſcribeth it) *beareth all Things, endureth all Things*, and conſequently, *this Burden*, in my Text, cannot but be *light*. If you are Poſſeſſors of Chriſtian and Evangelical Love, you have all Religion in ſhort, and within a leſſer Compaſs. All Chriſtianity is abbreviated and ſummed up in *Love*; and this, in its own Nature, includeth Pleaſure and Delight. Particularly, *brotherly Love* and *Kindneſs* are unſpeakably ſweet and delightful. He, that writes Dr. *Hammond*'s Life ſaith, it was his uſual Saying, *It is one of the greateſt Senſualities in the World* *to give.* It is an unſpeakable Pleaſure to a charitable Man to relieve the diſtreſſed. No Epicure takes more Delight in eating and drinking, than he doth in refreſhing the Bowels of the Poor. And, indeed, all Acts of Mercy and Kindneſs, are Acts of Pleaſure and Delight. Thus (to be more particular) concerning *Forgiving of Injuries*, the *Jewiſh* Doctors ſay, * *The Sweetneſs, that is to be found in this, far ſurpaſſes the Sweetneſs of Revenge.* That is, every good Man feeleth much more Pleaſure in forgiving his Neighbour, than others do in taking Revenge on thoſe that have injured them. Again, *Meekneſs*, *Gentleneſs*, and *Humility*, how grateful are they to ſanctified and regenerate Minds? What Eaſe and Quiet, what Peace and Calmneſs, do *Patience* and *Contentedneſs* bring? Godlineſs, with *Contentment*, is great Pleaſure as well as great Gain. This is the Grace which ſatisfies all our Wiſhes, and fills the Sails of our moſt enwiden'd Deſires, and renders all Conditions ſweet and acceptable to us. As for the Duties of *Prayer* and *Faſting*, though they are *Puniſhments* among the *Papiſts*, and are inflicted by the Prieſts to make Satisfaction for Sin, yet certainly they are the moſt grateful and pleaſant Performances, and are attended with ſingular Delight and Complacency. *Sobriety* or *Temperance* is the laſt Grace I will mention; and, indeed, this hath a great Influence on all other Graces. How comfortable doth this make our Lives? How ſubſervient is it to all Holy Purpoſes, and how doth it promote the Deſigns of Chriſtianity? It is this which makes us enjoy ourſelves, and which gives a Reliſh to all lawful Pleaſures. A ſober and temperate Courſe of Life is the Parent of Eaſe and Health, it refines our Tempers, and exalts our Minds; it begets Peace and Serenity, chearful Thoughts and a clear Underſtanding, Chaſtity and Devotion, a good Conſcience, and a peaceable Departure into another World. And thus, it were eaſy to ſhew, how every particular Duty and Exertment of Holineſs conveyeth Pleaſure and Delight to us, and leads us to true Peace and Satisfaction.

† ——— *Semita certe*
Tranquillæ per Virtutem patet unica Vitæ.

When we reflect upon theſe ſeveral Parts of Religion and Virtue, we have good Reaſon to conclude, that God, even out of Kindneſs to us, made theſe our Duty; he intended, that they ſhould really be advantageous to us, and lead us to a Life of Eaſe and Happineſs. It might be added, that all theſe Virtues are conſiſtent and coherent with themſelves, and with one another; they are inſeparably faſten'd and link'd together; which contributeth much to the Eaſineſs of Virtue and Holineſs. All Graces go hand-in-hand, and they may all of them be practis'd together by us. But a Man cannot act all Vices at once; eſpecially, he cannot be infected with the Habits of them all, ſome Vices being ſo repugnant to others, and ſome of them being in Defect, and others in Exceſs. Therefore, when the Hiſtorian had repreſented *Caligula* as a Wretch polluted with all Manner of Vice, he ſolved it by || his being mad; or elſe it was impoſſible for one Man to have ſo many and contrary Vices. This happens very well for Mankind, and may cauſe them to embrace a virtuous Courſe of Life, rather than the contrary, becauſe the Former is attended with ſuch Conveniencies and Eaſe, and the Latter leads to Madneſs and Diſtraction of Mind. It was obſerv'd long ſince, by *Plato*, that the * *Idea of Virtue is one, but that of Vice is infinite.* And his Scholar had the ſame Notion, † *Good*, ſaith he, *is uniform, but Evil is multiform.* Hence it is, that according to the Moraliſts, but eſpecially thoſe of the *Stoic* Sect, there is a *Connection of Virtues*; they all hang together, ſo that he, that hath one, hath all. The Ground of which Aſſertion is this, becauſe the Virtues are all aſſiſting to one another; they concur in their Operations, and when a Man acts one Grace, he, at the ſame Time, makes Uſe of the other. This is more eminently true of the Chriſtian and Evangelical Graces, and therefore thence I juſtly infer the *Eaſineſs* of them.

III. It

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* *Suavitas indulgentiæ multo major eſt ſuavitate vindictæ.*

† *Juvenal. Sat.* 10.

|| *Non immerito mentis valetudini attribuerim diverſiſſima in eodem vitia.* *Sueton.*

* Ἓν μὲν εἶδος τῆς ἀρετῆς· ἄπειρα δὲ τῆς κακίας. De Repub.

† Τὸ μὲν ἀγαθὸν μονοειδὲς, τὸ δὲ κακὸν πολυειδές. Ariſtot. Eth. l. 2.

III. It will appear, that the Chriſtian Inſtitution is *eaſy*, becauſe *Sincerity* and *Integrity of Heart* are reckon'd here as perfect Obedience. Hearty and ſincere Endeavours are the Things mainly required by the Chriſtian Law. If there be a *willing Mind*, it ſhall be accepted and rewarded, notwithſtanding our Frailties and Infirmities, our daily Lapſes and Miſpriſions. Uprightneſs of Heart is Goſpel-Perfection. The evangelical Diſpenſation is mild and favourable, its Laws are gentle and merciful. God hath been ſo good and gracious as to conſtitute *Repentance*, and to accept of it, after we have neglected our Duties, and committed the greateſt Sins. God hath (if I may ſo ſpeak) erected a *Court of Chancery* now under the *Goſpel*, which is unlimited in Caſes of Equity and Mercy, and gives Relief beyond the Rules of rigorous Juſtice; it mitigateth the Maxims of Severity, and proceeds according to the more gentle Dictates of Candour and Clemency. Grains of Allowance are thrown into the Balance of Juſtice, and her Sword is held up, but with the Point rebated. There is now no rigorous Exacting of Obedience to the moral Law. A perfect Obſervance is not required of us. And, with the Rigour of the Law, the *Malediction* of it is removed, whereby the leaſt Violation of it was threaten'd to be puniſhed. Under the Oeconomy of the Goſpel God is pleaſed with us, if we do our beſt, and act as we are able. He pitieth our Infirmities and Weakneſſes, becauſe they proceed from the general Corruption and depraved State of Mankind. He winks at our Ignorances, and paſſes by the Frailties of our Nature, but graciouſly rewards the Sincerity of our Actions.

IV. Another Conſideration, to evince the *Eaſineſs* of Chriſt's Yoke, is this, that a *New Principle* and *Nature* being wrought in us, we are thereby enabled to diſcharge all our Duties with a wonderful Facility. It is certain, that the evangelical Commands are hard, nay, impoſſible to Fleſh and Blood. It is no Wonder, that unregenerate Men complain of the Difficulties and Uneaſineſs which attend them, for they are not renewed in the Spirit of their Minds, they are not inwardly changed in their Wills and Affections; and thence it is, that they act in Religion with a great Reluctancy and Difficulty. They are not Partakers of the divine and heavenly Nature, which gives unto holy Men a new Senſe and Apprehenſion of the Things of God, new Capacities to entertain them, and a new Reliſh to diſcern between them, and Things of a different Quality. This fills the Soul with vehement Longings after God, and the Enjoyment of him; this affords us religious and holy Pleaſures, and cauſeth us to prefer them before the fooliſh Delights of the Fleſh. Hereby we *taſte* and *ſee*, that the Lord *is good*, and that all his Ways are holy, juſt, and righteous. It is this new Principle, which renders a good Man's Duties ſo eaſy and pleaſant, becauſe this makes him *love* his Religion. For all Pleaſure is rooted in Love; what we love is eaſy, and baniſheth from us all Thoughts of Hardſhips, much more of Impoſſibility. If we once love Religion for it ſelf, and eſteem and value it for its own innate Perfections, it will ſoon breed in us a genuine Complacency in it. This pure and unbyaſs'd Love of Goodneſs will make Religion, as it were, natural to us; we ſhall act with a wonderful Freedom and Choice, and never complain more of Difficulties; we ſhall run the Ways of God's Commandments, when our Hearts are enlarged with divine Love. We ſhall not be weary of well-doing, but perſevere in a holy Life, with a laſting Complacency and Satisfaction.

V. The Practice of a Chriſtian Life muſt needs be *eaſy* to a regenerate Perſon, becauſe he hath the Help and Aſſiſtance of the whole Bleſſed Trinity. Iſa. xl. 28, &c. *Haſt thou not known, haſt thou not heard, that the everlaſting God, the Lord, the Creator of the Ends of the Earth, fainteth not, neither is weary. He giveth Power to the Faint, and to them that have no Might, he encreaſeth Strength. They that wait upon the Lord ſhall renew their Strength, they ſhall mount up with Wings as Eagels, they ſhall run, and not be weary, and they ſhall walk, and not faint.* All this Variety of Expreſſions is to ſet forth the divine Aſſiſtance. The Apoſtle gladly acknowledges, that *he can do all Things thro' Chriſt who ſtrengthens him*, Phil. iv. 13. And the *Holy Spirit*, who is call'd the *Comforter* by way of Eminency, *helpeth our Infirmities*, Rom. viii. 26. Our Yoke cannot but be eaſy, when Chriſt Jeſus himſelf

ſelf draweth in the Yoke with us; our Burden muſt needs be light, when the Sacred Spirit * *takes it up with us*, and helps us to carry it. He mercifully alleviates our Grievances, and conducts us with Eaſe through all our Duties, and all our Streights. It is his peculiar Office to teach us the Myſteries of Heaven, and to lead us into all Truth, which is neceſſary to Salvation. He enlighteneth our dark Minds, and quickeneth them when they are dull; he ſtirs up holy Deſires in us, and enables us effectually to quit our Luſts. There are two Things which uſually cauſe *Difficulty*, *viz.* Contrariety and Diſproportion. The Former of theſe is taken away by that new Nature and Principle, which is infuſed into us, of which I ſpake before. This removes the Enmity which is naturally in us, againſt the Ways of Religion and Godlineſs. And then, as for Diſproportion, (which is another Cauſe of Difficulty, as a heavy Burden is unfit for a Child's Back) this is removed by that extraordinary Strength which is given us by the Spirit, ſo that our Duty is proportion'd to our Power. By the Aid of the Spirit of Grace we are enabled to gain a perfect Conqueſt over all our vicious Habits, and to live holy and blameleſs Lives, and to perform whatever is required of us. Now, if God be for us, if the divine Aſſiſtance accompanieth us, who can be againſt us? What Difficulties need we fear? What Hardſhips do we tremble at? Why do we complain, that Religion is uneaſy and inſupportable? Let us remember, that Chriſt's Commandments cannot be grievous, but his Yoke muſt needs be eaſy, when the Bleſſed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, help us to bear it.

* Συναντιλαμβάνεται. Rom. viii. 26.

VI. This Conſideration likewiſe may diſcover to us the *Eaſineſs* and *Pleaſantneſs* of Chriſtianity, *viz.* that *Peace of Conſcience and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, are the natural Reſult and proper Product of it. There are theſe three Things in Chriſtianity, Firſt, good and ſound Principles: Secondly, Holy and pious Actions proportionate to thoſe Principles: And Thirdly, Joy and Satisfaction ariſing from thoſe Principles and Practices. This *Joy* it is that makes the other two ſo acceptable and delightful. This I may call the Smiling of the Soul, or the Smoothneſs and Calmneſs of the Mind; which proceeds from this, that our ſinful and carnal Luſts, (which before raiſed a Storm and Tempeſt in our Breaſts) are diſowned, and the Laws of Chriſt are received and obeyed by us. Now there is a great Calm; now we can comfortably and chearfully reflect on our Lives and Actions, and view them adjuſted to thoſe Rules and Laws of Righteouſneſs which the Goſpel hath preſcribed. This heavenly Peace and Joy will prepare us againſt all Adverſities, and fit us to entertain the worſt Occurrences with Submiſſion and Reſignation. It will yield us the greateſt Solace in evil and perillous Times; it will ſupport us in Sickneſs; it will comfort us at Death, and it will never ſuffer us to ſink and deſpair. Though this Peace and Quiet, this Evenneſs and Serenity, theſe Delights and Satisfactions, which the ſincere Lovers of Holineſs experience, be unutterable and unconceivable; yet we are able to comprehend this, that they cannot but facilitate all the Duties of Chriſtianity, and render all the Actions we perform pleaſant and delightful. Theſe lighten the Burden of the Croſs, and make the heavieſt Calamities ſupportable. *Ye received the Word in much Affliction, with Joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 Theſſ. i. 6. *Affliction* and *Joy* are conſiſtent, and the Latter doth conciliate an Eaſineſs and Pleaſantneſs to the Former.

VII. and laſtly, The Promiſes of a *Reward* make Chriſtianity *eaſy* and *delightful*. There is a Recompence for righteous Souls, a Bleſſed Life hereafter ſhall be their Portion. The Thoughts of this take away all Hardſhips from Religion. When the Servants of God fix their Minds on thoſe liberal, but ineffable Rewards which are promis'd and aſſured them, they are able to diſcharge their Duty with Joy and Alacrity. Nay, Godlineſs hath the *Promiſe of the Life that now is* as well as of *that which is to come*, 1 Tim. iv. 8. *All Things ſhall work together for Good to thoſe that love God*, ſaith the ſame Apoſtle, Rom. viii. 28. Theſe, and ſuch like, are the *great and precious Promiſes*, (as St. *Peter* ſtiles them) which make our Religion ſo ſweet and lovely, ſo pleaſant and gladſome, ſo infinitely eaſy and delightful. It is true, we are to love Goodneſs and Holineſs for themſelves, (as I have already ſhew'd) but it is likewiſe lawful and commendable to love them for ſomething elſe, *viz.* for Immortality and Glory, or any other Fruits and Benefits that iſſue from them, whether they grow from them naturally, or are annexed to them by divine Bounty and Goodneſs. For Holineſs, as 'tis lovely in itſelf, ſo alſo in the Conſequences of it, and in both it is pleaſurable. So great was the Wiſdom of God that he affixed a Reward to what is good, that thereby Goodneſs might be more amiable, that we may be encourag'd, and bribed (as I may ſo ſay) to the Study of it. And thus, I have given you a brief Account of the Obſervation which my Text offer'd to you, and I doubt not but it every Way appears to you, that *Chriſt's Yoke is eaſy,* and *his Burden is light.*

Before I proceed to the *Application* of this Doctrine, I muſt reconcile it with ſome Paſſages of Scripture, which ſeem to run quite countre to it, as *Matth.* vii. 13, 14. *Enter ye in at the ſtrait Gate* (ſaith our Saviour) *for wide is the Gate, and broad is the Way that leadeth to Deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat. But* (on the contrary) *ſtrait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way which leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it.* At the firſt Peruſal of theſe Words, who would not think but that they are irreconcileable with thoſe of my Text? How are the *eaſy Yoke* and the *ſtrait Gate* conſiſtent with one another? And if the Way of Chriſtianity be eaſy, how comes it to paſs, that *many ſhall ſeek to enter in, but ſhall not be able?* (as it is ſaid in the parallel Place, in *Luke* xiii. 24.) * The plaineſt Anſwer that I can offer is this, that it is no Wonder, the Gate is narrow and ſtrait, and the Way difficult, and that few of thoſe who ſeek it are able to find it, becauſe they *ſeek it amiſs.* They *wilfully* make the Way to Life hard and uneaſy; it is their *own Fault* that the Gate is ſo ſtrait. They refuſe to enter in upon the Terms propoſed in the Goſpel, and ſo the Paſſage to Salvation and Happineſs becomes difficult, and indeed impoſſible by their own Miſcarriage. By Unbelief and Hardneſs of Heart, by an obſtinate Perſiſting in the Ways of Sin, they ſhut themſelves out of the Gate of Life. They will not be reſtrained by the Laws of Chriſt, they affect a looſe and licentious Life, they take the wideſt and broadeſt Way which leads to Deſtruction, and will by no Means be perſwaded to walk in that Path, which conducts them to ſolid Pleaſure here, and rewards them with endleſs Glory hereafter. This may ſuffice to aſſoil the firſt Difficulty.

There is *another Objection,* and that likewiſe is rais'd from Chriſt's own Words. *If any Man* (ſaith he) *will come after me* (*i e.* become my Diſciple, become a True Chriſtian) *let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs daily, and* (ſo) *follow me,* Luke ix. 23. Who is it that reads theſe Words, and will not preſently cry out that they are *hard Sayings?* Is this the *Yoke* that was ſo *eaſy* and *pleaſant?* Muſt we not only take Chriſt's *Yoke* upon us, but muſt we alſo take up *his Croſs?* And yet are we obliged to believe, that this is a *light Burden?* Notwithſtanding theſe Cavils and Complaints, I will make it appear, that the Propoſition, which I have inſiſted upon, is undeniably true; for, Firſt, there is Pleaſure and Eaſe even in Self-denial. Secondly, There is no leſs in taking up the Croſs.

There is Pleaſure in Self-denial, if we conſider it, 1. As it is in itſelf. 2. With Reſpect to ſomething elſe. If we view it in itſelf, and in its own abſtract Nature, we ſhall find that it is moſt reaſonable and equitable. For is it not according to the Rules of the beſt and moſt refined Reaſon to keep under and ſubdue our inferiour Faculties, to quell the Fleſh with the Luſts thereof, to maintain our Right and Empire over our baſer Part? When Chriſt bids us *deny ourſelves,* he requires this of us, that we ſhould bridle and reſtrain our brutiſh Appetites, which otherwiſe would get the better of us, and over-run our Reaſon. He enjoins us to put a Yoke upon the Beaſt, which will not become ſerviceable without it, but will grow wild and rampant, and inevitably deſtroy us. Let us then attain to right Notions of Things, and underſtand what it is to *deny ourſelves,* and then this Duty will not ſeem harſh and difficult. Let us conſider how reaſonable it is, that we ſhould condemn our own carnal Wiſdom, and look upon it as the greateſt Folly; that we ſhould lay aſide all our Prejudices againſt a holy and ſtrict Converſation, and renounce our perverſe Wills, and lay a Reſtraint on

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* *I anſwered this Objection more fully when I diſcours'd on,* [Strive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate.]

our inordinate Paſſions, and wholly give up ourſelves to the Will and Pleaſure of our Maker and Redeemer. Conſider, therefore, this Duty, not only in itſelf, but as it is commanded us by our Great Maſter, who hath Right to enjoin us what he pleaſes. Remember, that it is but Juſtice and Equity to deny our Wills, when Chriſt hath denied his for us. *Not as I will, but as thou wilt,* ſaid he, Mat. xxvi. 39. Didſt thou, O Bleſſed Lord, deny thy Will for our Sakes, and ſhall we count it harſh and unreaſonable to renounce our ſinful Wills for thee? Again, let me aſk you, whether you don't think, that an eternal Reward in Heaven is a ſufficient Incentive to this Duty. If Self-denial be a hard Task, yet hath not Chriſt made it eaſy, by promiſing and aſſuring us of an ample Recompence? It is true, we are bid to croſs our carnal Deſires and Appetites, and to do ſomething againſt our Propenſions and Inclinations, but for doing ſo, and for obeying the Precepts of our Great Maſter, we ſhall have the Retributions of a never-failing Bleſſedneſs in the higheſt Heavens. Thus the *far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory* is able to *preponderate* all the Objections brought againſt this Duty.

In the next Place, notwithſtanding the *other Part* of the Objection, of *taking up the Croſs,* i. e. of undergoing all outward Evils and Diſtreſſes, Chriſtianity will prove to be very *tolerable* and *eaſy*; if we ſeriouſly conſider with ourſelves, that we ſhall be real Gainers by all our Afflictions and Sufferings. For firſt, ſometimes we meet with Reparation and Satisfaction, even in this Life. Thus it was with *Job*; after the Devil and his Agents had violently *diſtrain'd* his Goods and Cattle, you read how Providence made him (as it were) a *Replevin*; and his latter End was more proſperous than his Beginning; for he had twice as much as he had before. Nay, I may boldly affirm, that we are always recompens'd, and that amply, in this Life; for by our Calamities and Sufferings our Sins are diſcover'd, our Graces are encreas'd, and our Lives are amended. Beſides, our Joy and Comforts flow in apace to us, when we are at a low Ebb, in reſpect of the World. *As our Afflictions abound, ſo our Conſolations abound much more,* 1 Cor. i. 5. Laſtly, in the Life to come, we gain by theſe our worldly Croſſes and Diſtreſſes, for they exalt our Glory, and add Degrees marvellouſly to our everlaſting Happineſs. And thus, in ſhort, you may ſee how our *taking up the Croſs* conſiſts with the Pleaſure and Sweetneſs of Chriſtianity. Nay, it is clear from this laſt Conſideration which I mention'd, that the Chriſtian Yoke *is eaſy,* becauſe *it is ſo hard.* Wonder not at what I ſay. It is a Paradox, but very true; for our Hopes of future Happineſs are the greater and ſtronger, becauſe our preſent Troubles and Croſſes are ſo heavy. And our Bleſſedneſs hereafter ſhall be encreaſed, by the Difficulties we meet here. The more preſſing our Burden is now, the more weighty will our Crown of Glory be then; which muſt needs make our preſent Condition eaſy and comfortable.

Having thus anſwer'd the moſt conſiderable *Objections,* that can be levell'd againg the Propoſition, I will make theſe *practical Concluſions* from what hath been ſaid.

I. If Chriſt's Yoke be eaſy, and his Burden light, then let us, with all Thankfulneſs, acknowledge the Goodneſs of God in freeing us, by the Coming of his Son Chriſt Jeſus, from the *Jewiſh Yoke,* and from the *Yoke of Satan.* Let us bleſs God, that Types and Shadows are vaniſh'd by the Riſing of the Sun of Righteouſneſs; that the burdenſome Service of Sacrifices and Ceremonies is removed; that our Religion is cheaper, and yet of more Worth and Value than the Moſaical Diſpenſation was; that God hath made us the Servants of that Religion, which, upon the greateſt Deliberation, we muſt needs chooſe before any other whatſoever, both for its inward Excellency, and for the ample Rewards which are annexed to it. But you have much more Reaſon to bleſs God, (thoſe of you who have felt the Efficacy of Chriſt's Coming) that you are freed from the Yoke of Sin and Satan. This is yet greater Matter of Thankſgiving than the former. Thoſe of you, who are Partakers of this glorious Liberty of the Sons of God, ought to extol and magnify the divine Mercy, that there is found out this new and living Way, whereby you are reconciled to offended Juſtice, and that you are adopted into that Religion, which hath redeemed you from the greateſt Bondages, and is itſelf the greateſt Freedom. This ought to be greater Occaſion of Joy to you than the Deliverance from the *Egyptian* Task-maſters, or the Return afterwards from the Captivity in *Babylon* were to the *Iſraelites*. This, this is more valuable than a Diſcharge from the vileſt Servitude, than a Freedom from the ſtreighteſt Bonds, than a Deliverance out of the darkeſt Dungeon.

II. If Chriſt's Yoke be eaſy, then correct your Miſtakes concerning the Chriſtian Religion, and all the Exerciſes and Duties of it. Theſe are not (what the Generality of the World take them to be) hard and grievous, ſad and melancholick, diſmal and forlorn. *Delight* is ſo cloſely riveted into the very Eſſence of them, that it is beyond the Art or Power of any Man to divide the one from the other. Chriſt's Precepts are, in their own Nature, ſweet and pleaſant; all the Duties commanded by him are, in themſelves, good, and the Performance of them is attended with unutterable Solace and Delight. Indeed, voluptuous and ſenſual Perſons imagine, that there is no Pleaſure but in vain and carnal Diſports, in full Bowls, and wanton Embraces, and in all Manner of looſe and extravagant Mirth. They do not imagine, what Pleaſure holy Men find in the exact Knowledge of their Duty, and in being put into that Way wherein they ſhall aſſuredly pleaſe their Maker, and be acceptable to the great Author and Preſerver of their Beings. They do not apprehend, what vaſt Solaces and Delights are to be found in devout and fervent Prayers, in univerſal Love and Charity, in Chriſtian Humility and Condeſcention, in vehement Longings after Heaven, in Communion with God, and in the Joys of the Holy Spirit. Theſe ſeem to unſanctified Minds to be void of all Pleaſure; for they fancy, that they have engroſs'd all Delights to themſelves, and that there are no other but what they are Poſſeſſors of. But my Text baffles this fond Conceit, and aſſures us, that the Apprehenſions, which the World hath of Chriſtianity, are moſt unreaſonable and abſurd. Holy Men, like our Saviour, *have Meat to eat, which the World knoweth not of*, John iv. 32. They have Pleaſures to regale themſelves with, which prophane Perſons are wholly ignorant of. It is the Excellency of a great and ſumptuous Feaſt to want all groſs Meats, and to abound with Dainties only. This is the high Commendation of the Chriſtian Religion, that it hath nothing mean and common in it; it feaſts us with ſpiritual and heavenly Delicacies, which far ſurpaſs thoſe which are carnal and ſenſual. A holy Life, and the conſcientious Diſcharge of our Duties, are ſweet and delicious, although the greateſt Part of the World pronounce them to be either inſipid or bitter. But all that can be ſaid to them is this, that their Palates are vitiated and corrupted, their Judgments are debauched, and ſo they are no competent Judges in the Caſe. There is nothing ſo abſurd, but they will defend and plead for, becauſe they like it. There wanted not one odd Fellow of Old, who would croſs all the reſt of the Philoſophers, and held that Snow was black. In a reſembling Manner, there are ſome who will maintain Sin to be pleaſant, though it be their greateſt Plague and Miſery.

III. Since Chriſt's Yoke is really eaſy and delightful, let me apply my ſelf to thoſe *weak* and *diſconſolate Chriſtians*, who are heard to groan under it, and bear it with drooping Minds. Take Courage ye diſtreſſed Souls; let not your diſturbed Fancies create Hardſhips, where there are none. * *Say not in thine Heart, who ſhall aſcend into Heaven? that is to bring Chriſt down from above: or, who ſhall deſcend into the Deep? that is to bring up Chriſt again from the Dead.* This is none of thy Concern: Chriſt is not to be fetched from Heaven, or brought up from the Grave by any Pains of thine. It is done to thy Hands. Chriſt undertook the difficult Part of Chriſtianity, but thine is eaſy and pleaſant, and there are no Rigours and Hardſhips that attend it. † *The Word is nigh thee, even in thy Mouth, and in thy Heart: that is, the Word of Faith which is preached,* viz. *that if thou ſhalt confeſs the Lord Jeſus, and ſhall believe in him in thy Heart, thou ſhalt be ſaved.* Thus thou ſeeſt that Chriſtianity is eaſy; let not therefore the ſeeming Hardſhips, which thou meeteſt with, diſmay thee. Fancy not in thy deſpairing Thoughts, that a ſtrict Life is an intolerable Burden. Thy God will be with thee to ſupport thee, the Holy Spirit will help thy Infirmities, Chriſt Jeſus is compaſſionate and loving, he *will not break the bruiſed Reed, nor quench the ſmoking*

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* Rom. x. 6, 7.

† Ver. 8, 9.

Flax, Matth. xii. 20. Chear thyſelf with this, that thy gracious Father will uphold thee with his everlaſting Arms, and he will enable thee to go beyond the narrow Limits of thy own Strength. His Grace is ſufficient for thee, and, after all thy ſpiritual Conflicts, thou ſhalt be more than Conqueror through Chriſt, that hath loved thee. Fix this upon thy Mind (and let it adminiſter Comfort to thee) that every Chriſtian, in the Diſcharge of his Duty toward God and Man, hath, even in this Life, ſomething to reward him; and if he ſhould never receive any more, yet he hath no Cauſe to complain, or to wiſh that he had done otherwiſe. Were there nothing elſe in Religion, but that inward Complacency which we take in it, this alone were enough to commend it, this alone were ſufficient to make us love it. Wherefore comfort one another with theſe Words.

IV. I infer from what hath been ſaid our great *Inexcuſeableneſs*, if we do not live Holy Lives, and follow the Directions of our Maſter. His Yoke is eaſy; we cannot plead, that our Religion is impoſſible, and beyond our Power, as it is backed and aſſiſted by divine Grace. God, without Doubt, doth not exact Impoſſibilities of us; he hath not ſet us a Task ſo hard, that we cannot, with his Aſſiſtance and our own Induſtry, perform. We cannot excuſe ourſelves by ſaying, that there is ſome unſufferable Homage exacted of us, that the Keeping of the Commandments is inſuperably difficult. No: God hath uſed all Means to make Holineſs amiable in the Eyes of Men; he hath abundantly commended it to us, and he gives ſufficient Helps to put it in Practice. It will therefore be our own Fault if we periſh, and we ſhall have nothing juſtly to reply againſt God at the laſt Day of Accounts. Let us ſeriouſly think of this, that we ſhall be left wholly without Excuſe, or Pretence of any, if we be damned. The Ways of Holineſs are call'd by St. *Paul*, *the right Ways of the Lord*, Acts xiii. 10. And he ſtiles them likewiſe * *ſtrait Paths*; they are the directeſt, the neareſt, the ſhorteſt Way to true Pleaſure here, and to true Happineſs hereafter. But the Ways of Wickedneſs are ſaid to be † *crooked*; the Sinner in them makes Angles, turns aſide, ſtrayeth, goes about, and wearieth himſelf, and meets with innumerable Difficulties: Wherefore, how unreaſonable and abſurd is it to chooſe the Ways of Sin before thoſe of Righteouſneſs? *If the Prophet had bid thee do ſome great Thing*, ſaid *Naaman*'s Servant to him, *wouldeſt thou not have done it? How much rather when, he ſaith, waſh and be clean?* In the ſame Manner I may ſpeak to you, if God had enjoin'd thee ſome huge Difficulties, and had conſtituted ſome wonderful Auſterities to be the Conditions of the Goſpel, even then thou hadſt Reaſon to comply with the divine Command, and not to ſcruple at God's Will, which is uncontrollable. But how art thou bound *much more* to the evangelical Laws, ſeeing they are ſo mild and gentle, and impoſe nothing but what is, in itſelf, reaſonable, juſt, and good? Thy Duty and Work are thy Wages, and all the Actions of Chriſtianity, which are incumbent on thee, are their own Rewards. Conſider then, O Man, how great thy Torments will be hereafter, how ſharp the Stings of thy Conſcience, when thou ſhalt remember that thou didſt refuſe an eaſy and pleaſant Religion, a Religion which thou mighteſt have embraced with ſo much Advantage and Intereſt; when thou ſhalt call to Mind upon what eaſy Terms Grace was profferr'd to thee, and how juſt and reaſonable a Thing it was to have accepted it. This will enhanſe thy Torment, and render thy Condition moſt deplorable, and altogether deſperate. I beſeech you conſider this, and weigh it ſeriouſly, that if you periſh everlaſtingly, you muſt impute it wholly to yourſelves. What more can God do for you than he hath done? What greater Proviſion can be made by him for your eternal Welfare, than that which you every Day experience, and (if you will) may enjoy the Fruits of? How infinitely hath God condeſcended to your Weakneſſes? What great Allowances doth he make for your Slips and Failings? How ready is he to receive you to Pardon and Mercy? How compaſſionately doth he court and invite you to come to him, and to be ſaved? How ſweet and agreeable are all his Precepts? How then will you eſcape, if you neglect ſo great Salvation?

* Heb. xii. 13.

† Pſal. cxxv. 5. Prov. ii. 15.

V. Suffer a Word of *Exhortation.* Be intreated to walk as thoſe who are under ſo eaſy a Yoke. Let the Power and Vertue, of ſo excellent a Religion, be taken notice of in your Lives. Let the Pleaſantneſs of it diſcover itſelf in the Chearfulneſs of your Looks, Words, and Behaviour. If it be true, that they tell us of *Socrates* (that great *Heathen* Philoſopher) that he always wore the ſame Countenance at home and abroad, however the World went with him; then ſurely the Man, who calls himſelf *Chriſtian*, and lives by more refined Principles, hath greater Cauſe to ſmooth his Brow, and to look pleaſantly at all Times. For his Religion is ſweet and delightful, and all the Exerciſes of it are both founded in the deepeſt Pleaſure, and follow'd with the higheſt Rewards. Let the inward Senſe of this have an Influence on your Lives; let it expreſs itſelf in the Serenity of your Countenances, and gild your Faces with Smiles. Let your chearful Deportment acquaint the World, that you ſerve a good Maſter, whoſe Service is accompanied with unſpeakable Joy and Delight. Tho' you meet with ſome Things in your Religion, which ſeem *heavy* and *uneaſy*, yet let this chear and comfort you, that it is *rich* and *precious*, and will abundantly reward you for the Bearing of it; as a Man would be content to be loaded with Gold, ſo he might have it for the Carrying it. Be exhorted therefore, ſeeing Chriſtianity is ſo eaſy and pleaſant, to take this Yoke upon you. Lay aſide all Prejudices, caſt off all Hindrances and Impediments, and reſolve in the Power of God to ſubmit your Necks to this ſoft and Diſcipline. Let nothing diſcourage you from this Undertaking; let not Cuſtom and evil Habits, let not the Influence of Education and Company, let not bad Principles or evil Examples, let not the Weakneſs and Frailty of your Nature, and your in-bred Pronity to Vice, nor any State or Condition of Life wherein you are placed, nor any Thing elſe of what Quality ſoever, hinder you from taking this Yoke upon you. And when you have done ſo, let *Zeal* and *Fervency*, Forwardneſs and Activity, be the Fruit of ſo pleaſant an Enterprize. Serve God with all your Heart, and all your Mind, and all your Strength; and ſtill breathe after fuller Enjoyments and Participations of the divine Grace. In ſhort, let *Conſtancy* and *Perſeverance* be the Reſult of ſo eaſy and grateful an Employment.

Now there is one Thing ſtill remaining (which truly may be reckon'd as the Chief of all) *viz.* to put you into the Way, how you may experimentally find this Doctrine true. Therefore, that the Practice of Holineſs may prove to you, as it is, in itſelf, pleaſant and delicious, that you may taſte and ſee that God and his Ways are good, I will leave with you theſe following *Directions*, which I hope will be very ſerviceable to ſo great and worthy a Deſign.

1. Be *frequent* in the Exerciſe of religious and holy Duties. It is *Uſe* and *Cuſtom* which introduce an Habit, and it is that which begets Promptneſs and Eaſineſs in all our Actions. At firſt, it is true, Religion may ſeem harſh and ſoure, and bring with it no ſmall Diſguſt and Trouble; but afterwards *Frequency* will make it habitual and eaſy. It is no Wonder, that Religion is complain'd of by many as a ſevere and troubleſome Thing, when they are ſo ſeldom acquainted with it, and the Duties that belong to it. This, in the very Nature of the Thing itſelf, muſt needs cauſe them to be backward to perform thoſe Duties, and eſpecially an Inability to perform them aright. Nay, oftentimes they find, that their familiar and frequent Converſe with the World defaceth thoſe Principles of Goodneſs, which they had formerly imbibed: And then new Habits are introduced, Habits of Sin and Wickedneſs; and theſe quite blot out the other imperfect and faint Entertainments of Virtue. He then, who would experimentally find the Eaſineſs and ſatisfactory Pleaſures of a holy Life, muſt reſolve to take up Religion as his *Buſineſs* and *Employment*, to be intereſted in it in all Companies, and at all Times, and upon every Emergency of his Life. Beſides ſolemn Time, ſet apart by God's Appointment for his publick Service, he muſt daily chooſe ſome other fit Seaſons for the Exerciſe of Piety and Devotion. It is a daily and familiar Intercourſe with Religion, that brings us into the Love of it, and Complacency in it. One Duty is a Help to another; thus, Watchfulneſs is uſeful to Praying, and Praying is promoted by ſpiritual Watchfulneſs.

And this may be made good in many other Inſtances. Nay, every Duty is a Help to itſelf; for as we ſometimes find the Stomach ſet on edge by eating, ſo the ſpiritual Appetite and Affection are excited by the actual Exerting of them. By Praying, Meditating, and Believing, and the like Exerciſes of Chriſtianity, we encreaſe our Deſires and Abilities to pray, meditate, and believe. *Ephraim*, (ſaith the Prophet *Jeremiah* xxxi. 18.) was as a Bullock *unaccuſtomed to the Yoke*, and on that Account it proved heavy and grievous to him. So be aſſured of it, that the *Yoke* of *Chriſtianity*, as well as that of *Affliction*, ſeems heavy, becauſe we are *not accuſtomed* to it. What, therefore, the ſame Prophet ſaith of the Yoke of Affliction, that *it is good that a Man bear it in his Youth*, (Lament. iii. 27.) may as truly be ſaid of Chriſt's Yoke. If Maſters of Families, and thoſe who have the Education of Children, would endeavour to inſtil virtuous Principles into their Minds betimes, the Practice of Holineſs would not be ſo hard as oftentimes it proves. If Children were taught to remember their Creator in the Days of their *Youth*; if like *Timothy*, they knew the Scriptures *from their Childhood*; if like *Joſiah*, they ſought after it, whilſt they are *young*; if like *Samuel*, they were dedicated to God in their Childhood; if their firſt and early Years were ſeaſon'd with Grace, and the Exerciſe of all holy Duties, they would wonderfully grow up in the Way of Godlineſs, and attain to a true Senſe of Piety, and reckon Chriſtianity the greateſt and moſt raviſhing Pleaſure. It is a long and accuſtom'd Practice of Virtue, which muſt create in us a laſting Delight. Moſt exellent was that Admonition of *Pythagoras*, *Chooſe the beſt Way of Life, and Cuſtom will make it ſweet.* It fares in this Caſe as, Philoſophers tell us, it doth with natural Motion, which is ſlow and tardy at firſt, but afterwards it waxes nimbler, and the longer it continueth, the ſwifter it groweth. This is the firſt Direction, and if you make Uſe of it, you will find it very effectual.

2. Another Direction is ſuggeſted to us from our Saviour's Words, in the Verſe but one before my Text, *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden.* If you would experience Chriſt's Yoke to be eaſy, you muſt firſt labour under the Burden and Load of Sin, under the Senſe of God's Anger due to you for it. If you would find a Pleaſure in Chriſtianity, endeavour to ſee the Miſery you are in by reaſon of your degenerate State; be apprehenſive of the heavy Weight and Preſſure of God's Wrath, and then you will be willing to ſubmit to the Terms of the Goſpel, and to look upon them as very reaſonable and equitable. By all means ſtrive to be ſenſible of the Uneaſineſs of Sin, of the Sting, the Plague, the Curſe of it, of that unſupportable Burden you lie under as long as you are at Enmity with God; and then Chriſt's Burden will be light, and you will bear it with extraordinary Pleaſure and Content.

3. Another *Direction* is intimated to us in the Verſe immediately foregoing my Text, *Take my Yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart.* In which Words Chriſt ſets himſelf before his Diſciples and Followers, as an eminent Example of Meekneſs and Humility; as if he had ſaid, would you have my Yoke to be eaſy to you, then fail not to imitate me in my great Humility and Condeſcention. As I left my Father's Boſom, and came down to die for you Sakes, as I denied my ſelf, and took upon me the Form of a Servant, to deliver you from the Servitude of Sin, ſo do you, in your Degree and Capacity, give all Demonſtrations of a humble and lowly Spirit; and aſſure your ſelves, that there is nothing can more effectually enable you to bear my Yoke with Chearfulneſs and Delight. Then, and not before, will Chriſtianity be eaſy, when you prepare yourſelves for it by a meek and gentle Temper, when you ſubdue all Pride and Self-conceit, and baniſh all over-weening Thoughts of your own Sufficiency, Worth, and Merits.

4. If you would arrive to the Pleaſure of Religion, highly value, and make Uſe of the Communion of Saints. The Way of Holineſs becomes uneaſy and irkſome, becauſe Chriſtians are not careful to maintain a pious Converſe and Intercourſe with one another. How pleaſant and joyful might our Religion be to us, if we would make Uſe of the Gifts and Graces which are in other Believers, and which were all imparted to them for mutual Edification and Comfort?

fort? If we would affectionately pray for one another; if we would *conſider one another to provoke unto Love and to good Works*; if we would *build up one another in our moſt holy Faith*; if we we would *rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep*; if we would *look not every Man at his own Things, but every Man alſo on the Things of another*; (as the Apoſtle bids us, *Phil.* ii. 4.) if we would help and ſtrengthen one another, and (as the ſame Apoſtle commands, *Gal.* vi. 2.) *bear one another's Burdens*; if we would diſcharge theſe, and the like Offices of Kindneſs, for the Good of one another, how light would our Burden be, how pleaſant would all the Actions of the Chriſtian Religion prove, and with what Courage and Contentment ſhould we perform all our Duties, and undergo all our Sufferings?

5. If you deſire to find Eaſe and Delight in Chriſtianity, entangle not your ſelves too much, either with the *Affairs* or the *Pleaſures* of the World, eſpecially not with the Latter. For the exceſſive Pleaſures of the World will make you diſguſt the Deliciousneſs of Religion; an immoderate Proſecution of ſenſual Delights, will ſo glut your Minds, that they will loſe the Reliſh of ſpiritual Things; it will dull the Appetites of your Souls, and make them unable to taſte the Pleaſures, which are intellectual and heavenly; it will choke your Senſe of Holineſs, and extinguiſh your Deſire after another and a better Life. For the Soul, being ſunk into Matter, is capable of none but corporeal and carnal Pleaſures. The Offers of Religion are ſlighted, and thoſe ſublime and ſpiritual Delicacies, which heavenly Minds are raviſh'd with, are trampled under Feet. It concerns us, therefore, to moderate ourſelves in the Uſe of all earthly Enjoyments, or, (in the Apoſtle's Words) *to uſe this World as not abuſing it*, and to long for the Pleaſures and Joys of Eternity, and to deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt, which is beſt of all. For he, that is too much immerſed in the Pleaſures of the World, will never entertain with any Savour the Things of God, and of another World; he will never be able to ſay, from Experience, and an inward Senſe of his Soul, that Chriſt's Yoke is eaſy, and his Burden light.

6. Conſider what the Servants of God have done and undergone, and you will not think, that any Thing is hard and difficult in Religion. Remember, how the Primitive Saints, and the Holy Martyrs in After-ages, drowned their Affections to the World in their own Blood; how they deſpis'd thoſe Vanities, which we ſo much indulge and doat upon, and fled from them into the hotteſt Flames. But, above all, meditate on Chriſt's Sufferings and Undertakings, and then you will never afterwards talk of Hardſhips. You will readily take up his Yoke, when you conſider that he took up the Croſs for you. You will then part with all Things, rather than abandon your Religion; you will, if you be call'd to it, ſacrifice yourſelves to his Service, and lay down your very Lives to bring Glory to him, who ſhed his moſt precious Blood for you.

7. Look up to the Manſions of Glory, which are prepared for thoſe who diſcharge a good Conſcience, and die in the Lord, and you will find Eaſe and Pleaſure in Religion. If, with *Moſes*, you have Reſpect unto the Recompence of Reward, you will deſpiſe the World, and the Pleaſures of Sin. What dangerous Adventures do Ambition and Hopes of Honour and Preferment put Men upon? And ſhall not the Expectation, yea, and the Aſſurance of a Crown of Life, encourage Chriſtians to fight the good Fight of Faith, and chearfully perform whatever the Laws of Chriſtianity require of them? Shall not a Taſte of thoſe Pleaſures, which are at God's Right Hand, make all Hardſhips ſweet and eaſy to us? Shall not the Contemplation of future Glory create a Pleaſure and Satisfaction, even in the moſt difficult Undertakings of this preſent Life?

8. and laſtly, If you would feel the Sweetneſs and Pleaſantneſs of Chriſt's Yoke, daily upon your Knees beg of God, that he would diſcover this to you; earneſtly beſeech him to ſhew you the Beauties of Holineſs, and the Amiableneſs of a godly Life; importunately deſire that he would effectually convince you, that Religion is your greateſt Intereſt in the World, and that (maugre all the Cavils of a vicious and degenerate Age) Godlineſs is the trueſt Gain and

the ſolideſt Pleaſure. And, to encourage you to make your Addreſſes to Heaven in this Manner, remember how unſpeakably great the Efficacy of ſuch Prayer is. This will certainly render Religion eaſy and practicable. If Men would pray more, they would, without Doubt, be enabled to do more. Be conſtant Petitioners then at the Throne of Grace; implore the Father of Heaven, from whom every good and perfect Gift doth come, that he would diſplay before you the Sweetneſs of Chriſtianity; that he would thoroughly perſwade you of this great and undeniable Truth, that *Wiſdom's Ways are Ways of Pleaſantneſs, and that all her Paths are Peace*; that *God's Commandments are not grievous*; in a Word, *that Chriſt's Yoke is eaſy, and his burden Light.*

THE

THE FREEDOM

Which attends the

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

JOHN viii. 36.

If the Son therefore ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.

ALL Men liſten to Lectures of Liberty, and are profeſs'd Enemies to Bondage and Slavery. The People of *Arabia* not liking to be call'd from the *Bond-woman* or her Son (though they were really deſcended from both) would take their Name from the *Free-woman*, and therefore were ſtiled *Saracens*, not *Hagarens* or *Iſmaelites*. Which intimates that *Liberty* is very precious, and that *Slavery* is a very deteſtable Thing. The thirty Tyrants of *Athens* are odious to this Day, and their Memory is accurſed. The lawleſs Tyranny of the *Turk*, and of the *Ruſſian* Emperor, and I may add, the arbitrary Sway of both are remember'd and mention'd with Abhorrence. Ask poor Captives and Priſoners, how they like their cloſe Confinement and Durance, whether there be any Muſick in the rattling of their Chains and Fetters, and how delightful a Proſpect it is to ſee nothing but thro' Iron Grates. They are the fitteſt Perſons to make pathetick Orations on Liberty. The very name of *Enlargement* and *Freedom* is pleaſant and chearing, the Sound of it is raviſhing, the Thing itſelf muſt be much more ſo. This is that which every one diſcourſes of ſo concernedly, which they court ſo eagerly, which they purchaſe ſo dearly, which they embrace ſo paſſionately. Let me requeſt you, therefore, to employ your Thoughts about ſo excellent and worthy a Subject, or rather let me lead you to the Contemplation of that Liberty which far tranſcends that of the Body and outward Man, that true and ſolid Liberty which is big with the greateſt Bleſſings, with the moſt deſirable Privileges and Immunities; and it is no other than that which is preſented to you in the Words which I have read unto you, *If the Son ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.*

You read in this Chapter, that our Saviour had been preaching to the *Jews*, that he was ſent from God, that he was the true *Meſſiah*, and the Light of the World: Whereupon *many of them believed on him*, as the Evangeliſt acquaints us, *v.* 30. Our Saviour, having thus gain'd them to the Chriſtian Faith, proceeds to exhort them to Perſeverance in it, and to encourage them likewiſe, by ſetting before them the great and ineſtimable Advantages which would accrue to them. *If ye continue*, ſays he, *in my word, then are ye my Diſciples indeed: And ye ſhall know the Truth, and the Truth ſhall make you free*, v. 31, 32. No ſooner had he told them, that the *Truth ſhould make them free*, but they were hugely diſpleas'd: They could not brook it that he ſhould talk to them of being made *free*, when as they were already *Free-men*. They anſwer'd him, *We be* Abraham'*s Seed, and were never in bondage to any Man: How ſayeſt thou, ye ſhall be made free?* v. 33. We were never yet a ſubdued People, we never were in Subjection to any. Slavery is a thing which we are not acquainted with, and therefore we ſcorn to hear you ſo much as intimate, that we are in a ſervile Condition.

But, by the by, obſerve the Blindneſs and Ignorance, the Forgetfulneſs and Sottiſhneſs of this People. What! Were they never in Bondage to any? Did not God himſelf ſay that *Abraham*'s Seed ſhould *ſerve* 400 *Years?* Doth not the Preface to the Decalogue plainly convince them, that they were *Bond-men* in *Egypt*, and doth not the Hiſtory to the *Judges*, and of the *Babylonian Captivity, prove as* much? Nay, were they not, at this very Time, tributary to the *Romans?* But ſuch was the Obſtinacy and Pride of theſe Men, that they would not confeſs their Subjection. Whereas, we ſee then, that they had no Reaſon to be angry with our Saviour, though he had ſpoken of outward and temporal Freedom. But he, waving that, ſpeaks of *ſpiritual Servitude and Freedom, viz.* that which reſpects the Conſcience and inward Man, and the Life or Death eternal. And to explain what he had ſaid, he adds, *v.* 34. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, whoſoever committeth ſin is the ſervant of ſin:* As much as if he had ſaid, I aſſure you, you are miſtaken in that Opinion of your ſelves, in thinking you are *Free-men.* Your being born of the Seed of *Abraham* is no Proof of it; for, let me tell you, if you live and go on (as I ſee you do) in a Courſe of Sin, and in the Commiſſion of the groſſeſt Vices, you are the greateſt *Slaves*, the moſt deſpicable *Bond-men* in the World. Then he proceeds, *v.* 35, 36. *The ſervant abideth not in the houſe for ever, but the ſon abideth for ever: If the ſon therefore ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.* That is, you being Slaves, you have no Right to be in God's Family, which belongs only to *Sons.* You are ſo far from having any Title to an Inheritance, that you are wholly at the Mercy of the Heir. For our Saviour alludes here to the Cuſtom of Families, and to the Caſe of *Son* and *Servant*, the latter of whom is liable to be caſt out of the Houſe, unleſs the Son, who ſucceeds as Heir, ſhall pleaſe to keep him, or ſet him free. This is your Caſe, O ye unbelieving *Jews*, you are Slaves to your Sins, you are in ſpiritual Bondage. *I know you are* Abraham'*s Seed, but you ſeek to kill me*, v. 37. Which plainly ſhews that you are enſlav'd to your Sins, and it is not your being *Abraham*'s Off-ſpring that will make you *Free-men*. But I will tell you, what will effectually do it; renounce the evil Way, and addict your ſelves to the Obſervance of my Laws, and then you ſhall be perfectly delivered from *Slavery* and *Bondage*, the very Name whereof you ſo much abhor; and you ſhall be Maſters of an *univerſal Liberty*, you ſhall be free as to all Things, wherein Freedom is deſirable. You ſhall not only be freed from Sin (which is the main and fundamental Freedom) but from all Things elſe that are any ways grievous to you. *If the ſon ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.*

In which Words are obſervable, 1. A great Benefit and Prerogative, *Freedom.* 2. The Founder and Donor of ſo excellent a Boon, *the Son, viz.* the Son of God, the *Meſſiah*, the Redeemer. 3. The Eminency and Tranſcendency of this Benefit, *Ye ſhall be free indeed*, * really and truly free. Theſe two Propoſitions then I will inſiſt upon, they being the genuine Reſult of the Words.

* Ὄντως ἐλεύθεροι.

1. That Chriſt hath purchaſed a Freedom for Believers.
2. That that Freedom is no imaginary and counterfeit Thing, but True, Real, and Subſtantial.

Firſt, I am to give an Account of that *Liberty* and *Freedom* which are purchaſed by Chriſt Jeſus, for all that believe on him and obey his Laws. And where ſhould we look for this excellent Privilege, and expect to have it fully repreſented to us, but in the Sacred Scriptures, that *perfect law of Liberty?* That I may, therefore, ſet before you the *true Liberty* of Believers, I ſhall, in every Particular that I ſhall name to you, refer you to the infallible Oracles, where you may ſatisfy your ſelves about the Nature and Extent of this great Benefit, vouchſafed by Chriſt to all his true Members and Diſciples. The Freedom which he hath purchaſed for all his Followers is two-fold; firſt, a Freedom *from* ſomething; ſecondly, a Freedom *in* or *to* ſomething. In theſe two chiefly conſiſts the Chriſtian Freedom, that a Believer is freed from whatever is *Evil, Sinful, and Miſerable*, and ſet free unto whatever is *Good and Holy*, and will make him Happy. But becauſe there are not only *evil* Things and *good* Things, but alſo Things *indifferent*, therefore there is a Chriſtian Liberty exercis'd about *theſe*; and accordingly this, with the other two, makes the *compleat and entire Liberty* which Chriſt hath purchaſed for us under the Goſpel.

I. I begin with that Chriſtian Liberty which conſiſts in a Freedom from *Evil*: And that Evil is two-fold, the Evil of *Sin*, and the Evil of *Puniſhment* for Sin. Firſt, the Liberty, which Chriſtians are Poſſeſſors of, conſiſts in a Freedom from the *Evil of Sin*. And this I will explain in three Particulars; they are free from 1. The Corruption and Impurity of the *Fleſh*. 2. The Stain of the *World*. 3. The Tyranny of *Satan*.

1. We are freed by Chriſt from the Corruption and Filth of Sin, which are in our fleſhly Natures. And here, that I may not be miſtaken in the very Entrance on this Subject, I do not mean, by this Freedom from the Filth of Sin, a being freed from all the Remainders of it in this Life, I do not mean a total and entire Deliverance from all Luſt and Concupiſcence. Sin in our mortal Bodies reſembles that *Leproſy in the Wall*, which could not be wholly extirpated, until the Wall was pull'd down. When theſe Houſes of Clay ſhall be demoliſh'd, and fall into the Grave, then, and not before, we ſhall be freed of the whole Maſs of Sin. This is the Infelicity of our preſent State, that we can never be perfectly exempt from Guilt and Tranſgreſſion. We cannot live quietly with Sin, and yet it is the Unhappineſs of our Condition, that we cannot live without it. The *Canaanites* and the *Perizites* ſhall be always in our Borders: We ſhall not be wholly reſcued from them till we arrive at the Land of Promiſe, the Regions of endleſs Bliſs and Happineſs. In this mortal State our whole Armour (as the Apoſtle calls it) would grow ruſty, if an Enemy did not ſometimes call us out to make uſe of it. *Carthage* muſt ſtand, if it be only for this, to keep *Rome* in Action. The Foe which is within us keeps us upon our Guard: Our daily Infirmities contribute to the ſtirring up of our Strength. Beſides, it is not thought fit we ſhould be utterly free from Sin in this World, becauſe we are here upon our Trial, we are placed on this Earth as in a State of Probation; we muſt grapple with our vicious Nature, otherwiſe we can give no Experiment of Conqueſt; we muſt here labour under the Burden of our Sins, that we may deſire and long to caſt it off, that we may breathe after Heaven, where we ſhall never feel the Weight of them any more, where we ſhall be wholly freed from all evil Motions and Inclinations, and perform ſinleſs Obedience to our Maker. When I ſay then, that Chriſt hath purchaſed for his Diſciples a Freedom from Sin, I do not ſpeak of their being quit of all the Reliques of it in this preſent Life; — but I mean only this, that they are freed from the Dominion of Sin, that the Son of God hath procured them an Exemption from the Sovereignty of it. And that this Freedom is meant here, by our Saviour, is plain from the Context, *Whoſoever committeth Sin is the ſervant of Sin.* * *To commit Sin* is to ſuffer it to have its full Sway and Sovereignty over us, to let Satan rule in our Hearts and Lives, and to be wholly at the Command of the evil Spirit, for *he that committeth Sin is of the Devil*, 1 Joh. iii. 8. But (as he adds in the next Verſe) *Whoſoever is born of God doth not commit Sin*, he is freed from the Prevalency and Predominancy of it: Though it be in him, yet it hath not the Maſtery of him, it doth not domineer over him. Now, if you ask, wherein the *Dominion of Sins* conſiſts, I anſwer, in theſe three Things, a plenary Conſent of the Will, an entire Delight and Complacency in Sin, and a Continuing and Perſevering in it.

* Ποιῶν ἁμαρτίαν.

Firſt, It conſiſts in a *plenary Conſent of the Will.* Sudden Surprizes are not unuſual, even with the beſt and holieſt Perſons. Theſe are ſometimes overtaken: When they are off of their Guard, they are unawares ſeized upon. There are Sins of daily Incurſion, which the moſt upright Men are obnoxious to; there are Frailties and Infirmities, there are Slips and Lapſes, which the more Watchful are liable to. The righteous Man may fall ſeven times a Day. But in all theſe there is not a full Conſent, there is not a direct and downright Suffrage of the Mind. The Spirit is ever combating with the Fleſh, and ſo the Man ſins —— ἑκὼν ἀέκοντι γε θυμῷ, with an unwilling Willingneſs. The Perſon under the Law that cried out, and reſiſted upon a Rape was counted Innocent, and ſo it is with every one under the Goſpel, who is ſurpriz'd, and in a manner forced, and gives not Conſent to Sin. Thoſe Words of the Apoſtle are remarkable, *Rom.* vii. 5. *With the Mind I myſelf ſerve the Law of God, but with the Fleſh the Law of Sin.* With his *Mind*, his better and refin'd Part, the rational Deſires and Faculties, he adhered unto God, although his carnal and ſenſual Appetite drew him another Way. This, perhaps, may be the Meaning of the Apoſtle's Words in *Gal.* v. 16. *Walk in the Spirit, and ye ſhall not fulfil the Luſts of the Fleſh: For* (ſaith he) *the Fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the Fleſh.* As if he had ſaid, although there be a great Conflict between the Spirit and carnal Part, and they are contrary one to the other, yet herein you muſt ſhew your ſelf regenerate and renewed, that you do not fully aſſent to, and accompliſh the fleſhly Deſires, you muſt *by no means* (the * double Negative in the *Greek* ſignifying as much) *fulfil* or *finiſh* the Luſts of the carnal Part.

* Οὐ μὴ τελέσητε.

Secondly, The Dominion of Sin conſiſts in a *Delight* and *Complacency* in it: And this every true Believer is freed from. The holy King profeſſes that he found more Pleaſure in God's Law, and the conſcientious Obſerving of it, than in *great Riches*, than in *finding great Spoil*, than in *the Honey* and the *Honey-comb*, *i. e.* the choiceſt Delights of the Taſte: And this is Part of the Character of every pious Man. Whereas, on the contrary, a taking delight in offending God, and acting in oppoſition to his Laws, is an undeniable Evidence of Sin's reigning in a Perſon, and having the Dominion over him. Though, I grant, a Kind of Alacrity and Complacency doth ſometimes accompany the Commiſſion of Sin in the beſt Men, and they may for a time hug and embrace their Luſts with no little Pleaſure, yet the Delight, which they take in Sin, is not ſo deep and grounded, as that of mere ſenſual Men; it hath not taken ſuch Hold of their Souls, it is not ſo rooted in their Minds. It is like ſome Fit, or ſudden Flaſh, which is ſoon over. But the Ungodly are not ſo, but ſhew their Delight in Sin to be of another Nature, by their continuing in it. Which leads me to the next Particular.

Thirdly, The Dominion of Sin conſiſts in a *Perſevering in it*: Which no ſincere and truly godly Man can be delivered up to. In the civil Law one Way of acquiring the *Dominion* of a Thing, is by *long Continuance of Poſſeſſion*, which is call'd by Civilians, *Uſucapio*; or, if it be of an immoveable Thing, as Land, 'tis call'd *Preſcription.* There is the like Thing in Morals: Dominion is gained by Continuance in Vice, the Devil gets the Maſtery over Men by their long perſiſting in Sin: Hereby he claims them as his own, and will never part with them. For Continuance in Sin carries along with it Hardneſs of Heart, and a refractory Spirit, and then Habits are contracted, and the Malady grows chronical and inveterate, and a Cure is very ſeldom wrought. Put all theſe Things together, and you have a Diſcovery of that *Dominion* and *Sovereignty of Sin* which Chriſt hath freed every Believer from. I told you I would refer you, in every Head of my Diſcourſe, to the Holy Scripture: Conſult that then, and there you will find the grand Charter for this firſt Sort of *Liberty*, *viz.* the whole ſixth Chapter of the Epiſtle to the *Romans*, more eſpecially the 6th and 7th *ver. Knowing this that our old Man is crucified with him, that the body of Sin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve Sin: For he that is dead* (*i. e.* crucified to all Sin, as he ſaid before) *is freed from Sin:* and the 12th Verſe, *Let not Sin therefore reign in your mortal Bodies, that ye ſhould obey it in the Luſts thereof:* And Verſe 14. *For Sin ſhall not have Dominion over you, for ye are not under the Law, but under Grace.* And Verſe 15. *Know ye not that to whom ye yield your ſelves Servants to obey, his Servants ye are to whom ye obey?* But I leave you to peruſe this Chapter at your Leiſure, and when you have done ſo, you will find that it entirely treats of *Service of Sin*, and *the Freedom from it*, which Latter the Apoſtle ſtiles, *the Service of Righteouſneſs*. So much for the firſt Particular, *viz.* the Believer's Freedom from the Dominion of Sin.

2. Chriſt hath enfranchiſed us from the *World*, and all that is evil and hurtful in it. See your Charter for this, in *Gal.* i. 4. *Chriſt gave himſelf for us, that he might deliver us from this preſent evil World.* This Deliverance or Freedom is to twofold, Firſt, from the *inordinate Love*; Secondly, from the *ſlaviſh Fear* of the World. He, that immoderately loves the Pleaſures, Honours and Riches of the World, is a Slave to them and it. He is at the Command of every Vanity; he is tied down to the Earth; he can look no higher than his Fields, or his Barns, or his Shop, or his Preferment, or whatſoever it is that he affecteth moſt in the World. He is always asking, *Who will ſhew him any Good?* But, by *Good*, he means nothing but ſenſual Delights, worldly Profit, and ſecular Advancement; and theſe he hunts after, and purſues with incredible Greedineſs, and thinks himſelf a loſt Man, when he is defeated of any of theſe. Thus the Voluptuous, and the Covetous, and the Ambitious, are enſlaved, and live in miſerable Servitude. But it is not thus with the Lord's Free-man; he uſeth the World as not abuſing it; his Heart is not faſtened to the Earth; his Wiſhes and Prayers are not terminated here. He hath the Moon, the tranſitory Things of this World, under his Feet; he is ſo far from letting them have the Aſcendent over him, that he tramples upon them. He knows, that theſe Things are too mean a Quarry for him to ſtoop to; he will not, therefore, ſo debaſe his Flight, but will make after higher Game. He is one, that hath renounced the World by a ſolemn Vow; he hath quenched his Affection to it in the baptiſmal Water; and if that Affection kindle again, he is ready, by the divine Aſſiſtance, to drown it in his own Blood, to part with all earthly Advantages, and to lay down his very Life for the Cauſe of Chriſt. He is prepared to fly from the World into the Flames, and to make them his Fiery Chariot to convey him to Heaven. He liſteneth to his Saviour's comfortable Words, *Fear not, I have overcome the World*; and he knows, that he will enable every Believer to do the like, in his Proportion. And *this is the Victory that overcometh the World, even his Faith.* By a ſtedfaſt Belief of another World, he gets the Conqueſt of this, and triumphs over all its deluding Baits and Snares.

But there is the dark as well as the light Side of the World. There are its Frowns, Afflictions, Croſſes, Troubles, Perſecutions, from the Dread of which a Believer is deliver'd. Which is the next Thing I mention'd, for * he is not to be accounted a *Free-man*, who either deſires or fears immoderately. Wherefore, as a good Man deals not on the Pleaſures and Advantages of the World, ſo he is not afraid of its Croſſes and Diſtreſſes. As he is freed from the ſervile Hopes of Riſing, ſo from the ſlaviſh Fear of Falling in the World. In order to this, he neither lets the Pleaſures and Delights of this Life, nor the Troubles and Diſappointments of it take faſt Hold on his Mind, and make deep Impreſſions there. Such Marks would be too apparent Tokens of his being ſtigmatiz'd for a Slave. What greater Servitude and Bondage can Men fall under, than a perpetual Dread of the Dangers and Loſſes of this World? Then you ſhall ſee them, like *Nicodemus*, ſhroud themſelves in the Dark, for fear of a Diſcovery; you ſhall ſee them ſneak and crouch to every baſe Deſign, and tremble at the ill Look or harſh Word of ſome Great Man: Whereas, our Saviour's Doctrine is, *Fear not them that can kill the Body, but fear him who is able to deſtroy both Soul and Body in Hell.* Hath not Chriſt endeavoured to free his Diſciples from unworthy Fears and Perplexities, and to poſſeſs their Minds with Patience and Chearfulneſs? Was not this particularly the Deſign of his laſt Diſcourſe, a little before his Death? Did not he aim at this chiefly, that *their Hearts might not be troubled?* And, if you conſider Things aright, you will find that it cannot be otherwiſe, but that every true Believer ſhould be free from the Fear of the World, becauſe he is freed from the *Evil* and *Judgment* of every Croſs; the Sting of every Calamity is taken out; the Curſe and Plague, which attend worldly Diſtreſſes, ſhall not come near him. Say then, that he is viſited with Pain and Sickneſs, yet the Evil of it is wholly removed; ſay, that he is reduced to Scarcity and Penury, yet this befals him not as a Judgment. Suppoſe, he is diſgrac'd and vilified, and perſecuted, yet

this

* *Qui cupit aut metuit Liber mihi non erit unquam.*

this is not properly a Puniſhment, but a Trial and fatherly Correction. You ſee then what he is deliver'd from; altho' he be not freed from bodily Diſeaſes, Poverty, Reproach, and the like Calamities, yet he is exempted from that which makes theſe to be *Evils*. Nay, I muſt add, that every faithful Servant of God receives *Good* and *Advantage* by all theſe. Theſe are ſo far from being a Curſe, that they prove a real Bleſſing to him. Loſſes and Troubles, and Afflictions, are the Preſents and Favours of Heaven to him. The Rod is a Kindneſs. The bitter Pill is in order to that, which is the ſweeteſt Mercy, Health. Outward Diſaſters promote and advance his inward Graces, and he is every Way better'd by the adverſe Accidents of this Life.

3. Chriſt having ſet the Believer free from the *Fleſh* and the *World*, he now reſcues him alſo from the Captivity and Tyranny of the *Devil*. But, by this, I do not mean, that every faithful Soul is freed from the Suggeſtions of Satan. No; the Spotleſs and Innocent Jeſus himſelf was aſſaulted by that black Fiend; he was driven, by the Holy Spirit, into the Wilderneſs, to be tempted of the evil One. And the Servant is not greater than his Maſter; there is no Believer, but experiences frequent Aſſaults from that malicious Spirit. Some rude Villain may be ſo hardy as to attempt the Chaſtity of the pureſt Virgin, but that Attempt doth not impair her Honeſty. Temptation renders not guilty, for then none would be innocent. The *Freedom* then, I am ſpeaking of, is not an utter Exemption from the Aſſaults of Satan; but it is this, that the Devil cannot approach to a Holy Man, without the Divine Permiſſion and Leave; whereas, God gives up wicked Men to the *Power* and *Diſpoſal* of the evil Spirit, ſo that they are carried Captive by him at his Will. This apoſtate Spirit, with his helliſh Companions, is ever deſigning the Ruin of the Godly: This roaring Lion is chiefly deſirous to make them his Prey, but, at the ſame Time, *the Lion of the Tribe of Judah* watches over them, and ſecures them from his Rage; Chriſt Jeſus, the Bleſſed Redeemer, takes care of them, and protects them from his Fury. This malicious Spirit of Darkneſs is confined; this old Dragon is chain'd up, ſo that he cannot accompliſh the Miſchief he intended; and when he is attempting to ſally out beyond his Limits, he is pull'd back by an Almighty Arm. We read, that he could not enter into the *Gadarens* Swine, without a Commiſſion from Chriſt. Surely then, he cannot meddle with Chriſt's Sheep, without asking Leave firſt. This powerful Mediator is interceding in Heaven for them; he prays, that their Faith may not fail; that Satan's Temptations may be baffled; that his Wiles and Stratagems may be defeated; that his Snares may be broken. Read the Promiſe of this Liberty, in *Rom.* xvi. 20. *The God of Peace ſhall bruiſe Satan under your Feet ſhortly.* Read what hath been undertaken and atchieved by Chriſt in order to this great Effect, *He hath ſpoiled Principalities and Powers* (i. e. the infernal Spirits, which had ſuch great Dominion in the World) *and made a Shew of them openly, triumphing over them in the Croſs*, (*i. e.* by his meritorious Death and Paſſion, ſubduing their Power and Dominion) *Col.* ii. 15. And again, 1 *John* iii. 8. *For this Purpoſe, the Son of God was manifeſted* * *that he might deſtroy the Works of the Devil*; that he might *looſe* and *untie* what the Devil had *bound faſt*. It is a Metaphor of the like Nature with this in the Text. Whereas, we were *Bond Slaves* to Satan, and taken *Captive* by him at his Will, we are by Chriſt's Undertaking *ſet at Liberty*, and are *recovered out of the Snare of the Devil*, as the Apoſtle well expreſſeth it. And this is the great Deſign of the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, and of the Diſpenſers of it; their Buſineſs is to pull down Satan's Kingdom, *to turn* † *Men from the Power of Satan unto God*, and, when they are turn'd, ſtill to endeavour, that the Sollicitations and Aſſaults of this Prince of Darkneſs may not prevail.

Hitherto, I have ſhew'd, that Chriſt frees his choſen Servants from the *Evil of Sin*. In the next Place (according to what I before propounded) I am to prove, that he delivers them from the *Evil of Puniſhment*, that is, from all the *evil Conſequences* and *Fruits* of Sin, as, namely, from the Guilt of it, from the Fear and Harm of Death, and from the Wrath of God both here and hereafter. 1. Chriſt hath freed all Holy Men from the *Guilt* and *Condemnation of Sin*. Tho' the Stain and Pollution of it remain, and cannot be quite waſh'd out in this Life, yet, by the Blood of Jeſus, they are ſo effaced, that they ſhall never appear for their Condemnation. Chriſt, when he died, drew his Croſs (as I may

ſo

* Ἵνα λύσῃ.

† Acts xxvi. 18.

ſo ſay) over the Debt Book, and with the Lines of his Blood cancell'd and blotted out all their Sins at once. You read of this eminent Inſtance of the Believers Freedom, in *Rom.* viii. 1, 2. *There is therefore now no Condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit.* The Devil is juſtly call'd *the Accuſer of the Brethren*; for it is his Employment to implead and draw up a Bill againſt the Saints. The Conſcience alſo is an Accuſer by its Office, and how dreadful ſome have found it, in diſcharging that Task, is impoſſible to expreſs. It hath indited and arraigned Sinners in ſo grievous a Manner, that they have turn'd their own Executioners. How great a Mercy then is it to be freed from the Accuſations of both theſe, or, though either or both of them accuſe, to be freed from Condemnation? This is that wonderful Bleſſing the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, in 2 *Cor.* v. 19. *God was in Chriſt reconciling the World unto himſelf, not imputing their Treſpaſſes unto them.* Tho' their Treſpaſſes be never ſo many and great, yet they are *not imputed*, they are not charg'd upon them as theirs, and conſequently they are acquitted and abſolved, and pronounced innocent and guiltleſs in the Court of Heaven, and they are no leſs in that of their own Conſciences. Now the Soul makes that Challenge of the Apoſtle, *Who is it that condemns? Who can lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect?* Which is grounded on that comfortable Aſſurance, which they have of the free Pardon and Forgiveneſs of their Sins, by the Blood of Chriſt, the Lamb ſlain before the Foundation of the World. He took off their Obligation to Puniſhment, by ſuffering Puniſhment for their Sins on the Croſs. This is *Redemption*; this is *Satisfaction*, whereupon follows Forgiveneſs of Sins, and conſequently a Freedom from the Guilt of all Sin.

2. The Liberty which the gracious Redeemer hath procured for thoſe that believe in him, is a *Freedom from the Fear of Death*, and from all Hurt that can come by it. For Chriſt having freed them from the *Sting* of Death, which is the Dominion of Sin, and the Guilt of it, it follows that Death can be no longer a Terror to them. There is nothing can make Death terrible but the Senſe of being obnoxious, by reaſon of Sin; therefore, when this is removed, and a Perſon is reckon'd void of Guilt, the Fear of Death is taken away. This is the Caſe of Believers; they are abſolv'd from their Sins by the Blood of Jeſus, and thereby Death loſeth its Sting, and can do them no Harm. Indeed, it ſhatters their earthly Tabernacle, but cannot prejudice the Soul, the immortal Spirit of Man. Nay, Death is ſo far from being prejudicial and hurtful to Holy Men, that they receive the greateſt Kindneſs by it. It is an Entrance to them into an endleſs Life; it gives them Poſſeſſion of everlaſting Joy and Happineſs; it is a Freedom from the State of Sin and Miſery, and an Introduction into Glory. Hence, is that triumphal Song in the Mouths of the Faithful, * *Death is ſwallowed up in Victory. O Death! where is thy Sting? O Grave! where is thy Victory? Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the Victory thro' our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* If it be asked then, why Chriſt did not free all Believers from Death, having freed them from the Dominion of Sin, and eſpecially ſince (according to the Apoſtle) *the Wages of Sin is Death*, I anſwer, the Apoſtle ſpeaks in this Place of ſpiritual and eternal Death, as appears from the *Antitheſis*, *the Gift of God is eternal Life.* And, it is certain, that all Believers are deliver'd from that worſt Sort of Death, which I ſhall anon particularly inſiſt upon. But as for bodily Death, that (as I have told you already) is a Paſſage to everlaſting Life and Glory. To die here is to be born into another World; to end this Life is to begin a State of immortal Happineſs. Wherefore, Death proving ſo great a Benefit to righteous Men, it is no Wonder, that they were not freed from it. Moreover, obſerve how *Sin* is aboliſhed, and in the like Manner is Death, which is the Wages of Sin. Sin, as to its Guilt, was aboliſhed by Chriſt our Head, and that perfectly; but in *us* the Mortifying of the old Man is imperfect, and but begun here, and conſequently the Reliques of Sin remain; and ſo likewiſe the Fruit of Sin, bodily Death is to be ſeen even in Holy Men, who yet are freed from the Obligation to eternal Death. And now Sin, which is the only dreadful Thing, being removed, it is impoſſible that Death ſhould carry Horror with it. See this Privilege, this *Freedom* convey'd unto you in expreſs Terms, *Heb.* ii. 14, 15. *Chriſt took part of Fleſh and Blood* (*i. e.* became Man, that he might be capable of dying, and) *that through Death he might deſtroy him, who had the Power of Death, the Devil*; *and deliver*

* 1 Cor. xv. 54, &c.

liver them, who, thro' Fear of Death, were all their Life-time ſubject to Bondage. And this Freedom, from the Terrors of Death, is confirmed and demonſtrated by the miraculous Reſurrection of Chriſt from the Dead. The righteous Man needs not fear, that he ſhall always ſleep in the Grave, and never be awakened to a better Life after this; for Chriſt's Riſing again is a Pledge and Aſſurance of the Saints Reſurrection. If the Head be exalted, the Members ſhall, in due Time, ſhare the ſame Privilege, and ſo they ſhall for ever be with the Lord. Chriſt himſelf died, that he might riſe to an endleſs and perpetual Life, and that he might purchaſe the ſame for his Followers. The Grave is now a Place of Honour, Chriſt having lain there. A righteous Man lays himſelf down in the Duſt as in a Bed of Spices, for it is perfumed by our Saviour. It cannot be thought wonderful then, that he entertains the Tidings of Death with Contentment and Satisfaction; that he deſires to depart, and to be with Chriſt his dear Maſter; that, with good *Simeon*, he cries out, *Now letteſt thou thy Servant depart in Peace*, now *thou letteſt me go free*; ſo the * Word imports, now thou doſt ſet a poor Servant at Liberty; now I can go hence *in Peace*; all Fear and Dread are baniſh'd from my Soul, and nothing but Serenity and Joy inhabit there.

* Ἀπολύεις.

3. We are acquitted from the *Wrath of God*, both in this World, and in another. The ſevere Sanction was, that *the Soul that ſinn'd ſhould die*, Ezek. xviii. 4. A violent and ſhameful Death, without Mercy, was the Penalty of every wilful Tranſgreſſion and Diſobedience. This was the *Rigour* of the Law which the Apoſtle calls a *Curſe*. *As many as are of the Works of the Law*, ſaith he, *are under the Curſe; for it it written, Curſed is every one that continueth not in all Things, which are written in the Book of the Law to do them*, Gal. ii. 10. We are all, by Nature, ſubject to this Curſe and Penalty, and that in the utmoſt Extent of it; for both temporal and eternal Puniſhments are the juſt Recompence of Sin. But under the Covenant of Grace, we are *freed* from this Curſe of the Law: *Chriſt hath redeemed us*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *from the Curſe of the Law, being made a Curſe for us*, Gal. iii. 13. Jeſus, by ſuffering on the Croſs, removed the Wrath of God, which is the Curſe due to Sin and Sinners. Believers are reſcued from Death and Miſery, they are releaſed from everlaſting Puniſhment, the *Worm which never dies, and the Fire which is never extinguiſh'd*. This is that unſpeakable Bleſſing, which the Apoſtle meant, when he ſaid, *Our Jeſus delivereth us from the Wrath to come*, 1 Theſſ. i. 10. It is true, this is not to be compleated till Doomſday; then the Servants of God ſhall have their final Releaſe, they ſhall be fully acquitted and diſcharged by the Judge of all the Earth, and Hell and Deſtruction ſhall claim no Part in them. But they are freed and acquitted already in their own Conſciences, and by the gracious Purpoſe of God, and by Vertue of the meritorious Undertaking of Chriſt. This is the *Freedom* which is conferr'd upon all the Faithful; a Freedom ſo great and wonderful, that he, who doth not value and admire it, is never like to experience it. Conceive within yourſelf, how a condemn'd Malefactor would rejoice at the Tidings of Pardon? How welcome News it would be, that he ſhould be quit from Priſon, and from a ſhameful Death? Think what a new Joy, or rather a new Life, this would create in him. This is ſome faint Reſemblance of that tranſcendent Bleſſing we are ſpeaking of, and of the marvellous Gladneſs and Exultation which accompany it. But no Thoughts can duly apprehend, no Language can ſufficiently expreſs this unparallell'd Mercy. Your own inward Feeling alone can lead you to the Underſtanding of it.

II. As the *Chriſtian Liberty* conſiſts in a *Freedom from Evil*, ſo likewiſe in a *Freedom to Good*. And this compriſeth in it theſe three Things, *viz.* A Freedom at the Throne of Grace, a Freedom of Heart and Life, and a Freedom or Readineſs to all Acts of Grace and Holineſs.

1. There is a Freedom at the Throne of Grace. The righteous Man, being a Favourite in the Court of Heaven, hath the Ear of that King of Kings, he hath free Acceſs to the Royal Preſence, and hath abundant Encouragement to preſent his Requeſts to the Divine Majeſty. You have this matchleſs Privilege confirmed to you by Holy Writ. *Ye have receiv'd the Spirit of Adoption*,

ſaith the Apoſtle, *whereby ye cry, Abba, Father*, Rom. viii. 15. Ye have the *Liberty of Children* to have recourſe to your Father, to cry aloud in his Ears, and to make known all your Wants to him. Now, as the imperfect Liſpings, and Stammerings of Children, carry with them ſomething that is pleaſant and delightful, and are a Kind of Rhetorick very prevailing with their Parents; ſo is it here, weak and imperfect Addreſſes, Sighs and Groans, are perfect Oratory in the Ears of the God of Heaven, who is the Father of Mercies, and the Lover of Souls. Hence it is, that believing Souls are encouraged to preſent their Petitions to their Heavenly Father: *Having Boldneſs to enter into the Holieſt, by the Blood of Jeſus, by a new and living Way which he hath conſecrated, and having a High Prieſt over the Houſe of God, they draw near with a true Heart, in full Aſſurance of Faith*, as the Author to the *Hebrews* ſpeaks, *Chap.* x. 19, *&c.* Here is παῤῥησία, (for that is the Word, which is tranſlated, *Boldneſs*) here is *Liberty*, (as the Margin renders it) here is a *Freedom* and *Confidence* beſtow'd upon every true Member of Chriſt, and it is no other than this, an Ability to pour out their Souls freely before God, to expreſs all their Deſires and Wants. And here is alſo a *full Aſſurance* added to this Boldneſs and Freedom; that is, they are aſſured of Succeſs, whenever they repair to the Throne of Grace, and offer up their Supplications there. They ſhall have what they aſk, or they ſhall have that which is better for them. This is able to diſpel all their Fear and Diſtruſt, and effectually to excite them to come unto God, thro' the Mediator Chriſt Jeſus, who will back their Petitions with his own Interceſſion. This *Freedom of Acceſs to God* is mentioned in other Places of the New Teſtament, as *Rom.* v. 1, 2. and *Eph.* ii. 18. And upon this the Apoſtle founds that Invitation of his, in *Heb.* iv. 16. *Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in Time of Need.* To come thus before God is the Purchaſe of Chriſt Jeſus alone; he hath vouchſafed us this high Honour, this ſingular Privilege, this excellent Freedom.

2. There is, in all Believers, *a Freedom and Openneſs of Heart and Life*, toward all Perſons they converſe with. They are very eminent for this; they diſcover a ſimple and ſincere Principle in all their Undertakings and Actions; it appears evidently, that they have no baſe Reſerve in their Breaſts; they are candid and ingenuous; they are what they ſeem to be in all their Enterprizes. You may diſcern, that they heartily aim at God's Glory, and the Good of Souls, and are not corrupted by ſiniſter Deſigns. They dare ſpeak the Truth, which * (as hath been obſerv'd of Old) is the Property of *Freemen*; as it is of *Slaves* to lie and falſify. † Nothing can be more *Baſe and Servile* than to ſpeak otherwiſe than we think, and no good Man will run himſelf into this Slavery. He always makes his Words the true Interpreters of his Thoughts; he acts and lives with an open Breaſt; ſo that *Momus* might have had his Wiſh accompliſh'd in him, and have ſeen into his very Heart. Being made up of Truth and Integrity, he is of an undaunted Courage and Reſolution. *We cannot but ſpeak what we have heard and ſeen*, ſaid the perſecuted Apoſtles. Tho' we are in Bonds for Chriſt, our Hearts and our Tongues are free; tho' our Bodies are confined, our Minds are at Liberty. A Priſon cannot check this free Temper; Fetters and Shackles cannot reſtrain it. He that hath a true Senſe of Holineſs on his Soul muſt needs appear for God, and, whenever he ſees him diſhonour'd, ſtand up and maintain his Cauſe. He will correct Vice where-ever he ſees it; he will encourage Piety in whomſoever he eſpies it. He cannot but diſcover his hearty Inclinations and Affections to Religion, by ſome outward Expreſſions. In Brief, the Spirit of evangelical Freedom cannot be kept in and reſtrain'd.

3. There is a *Freedom* and *Facility*, a *Readineſs* and *Chearfulneſs*, *in the Exerciſe of all Graces and Duties*, proceeding from a Principle of Ingenuity and Love. This is the true evangelical Liberty, which the Pſalmiſt prophetically ſpoke of, *Pſalm*, 110th deſcribing there the Kingdom of *Chriſt*, *thy People ſhall be willing* (ſaith he) *in the Day of thy Power*, Ver. 3. The ſame holy Man deſires to be upheld and eſtabliſh'd by this *free Spirit*, Pſal. li. 12. And, as an Effect of that, he declares, in another Place, that he will *run the Ways of God's Commandments, when he ſhall enlarge his Heart.* This is the Temper of all holy Men, their Devotion and

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* Ἐλευθέρου γὰρ ἀνδρὸς τ᾽ ἀληθῆ λέγειν. Euripid.

† Δούλου τόδ᾽ εἶπας, μὴ λέγειν ἃ τις φρονεῖ.

their Duty come ſpringing and flowing from them; whereas, the Religion of too many is, as 'twere, brought on with Engines, and is by mere Force and Extorting. What they do in Religion is generally out of Fear, which is the proper Paſſion of *Slaves*. Theſe are wont to do their Work becauſe of the Stripes, merely, by reaſon of the Laſh. This, I ſuppoſe, is the Meaning of the wiſe Man's Words, in *Pro.* xxix. 19. *A Servant will not be corrected with Words, i. e.* one of a ſervile Temper will do nothing without Force; he obeys, becauſe otherwiſe he muſt feel the Severity of that Hand which is over him. This is the Character of one that hath not attain'd to the Chriſtan Freedom, he acts out of Compulſion, and dread of Puniſhment. *A certain fearful looking for of Judgment and fiery Indignation* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) is the Reſult of of that *Spirit of Bondage*. But thoſe, whom the Son hath made free, and are Sons themſelves, have caſt off this ſlaviſh Temper, and are become *free*. See the Donation of this Liberty, in *Rom.* viii. 15. *Ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.* Here is a palpable Diſtinction, between the *Spirit of Bondage*, and the *Spirit of Adoption*; the Former is known by the ſervile Fear and Terror which accompany it; the Latter is diſcover'd by the loving and filial Temper, which is to be obſerv'd in it. An ingeuuous and ſon-like Diſpoſition actuates the regenerate Soul, it *ſerves God without Fear* (Luke i. 68.) without a ſlaviſh Fear of his Wrath and Indignation; it ſerves him as an indulgent and compaſſionate Father, and is led wholly by the Laws of Love. This is the Spring of his Actions; this is the excellent Principle which he moves by. You may *gather* that Fruit from him, which you muſt *pull* from others. You may diſcern in him a Forwardneſs and Readineſs of Mind to diſcharge all the Duties, which God commands him to perform; you may obſerve in him a generous and active Principle, enabling him to ſerve God with Alacrity and Gladneſs. It is this free Principle, this enlarged Heart, this willing Spirit, which renders Chriſtianity, and all the Performances of it, delightful to a Holy Man. There are unexpreſſible Raviſhments and Feſtivities, which fill his Soul; there are wonderful Tranſports of Love and Zeal, which poſſeſs his Mind, and actuate his whole Life; and now nothing can come amiſs to him, and there is Life and Vigour to encounter and baffle all Difficulties. He continually thirſts and pants after the full Fruition of God; he breathes after that pure *Æther*, which will chear his Soul to Eternity. He loves God immeaſurably, and he is ready for any Act of Religion, and he thinks ſometimes, there are ſcarce Duties enough to employ him. Whereas, others labour to be good Husbands of their Religion, and take care that they be not too waſteful and profuſe; they do all Things coldly and dully, which ſhews there is wanting ſomething within to exert the vital Operations of Grace. When they are puſh'd on, they ſeem to move with ſome Concernedneſs; but let them alone to themſelves, and then they are ſeen to be heavy and phlegmatick Creatures, almoſt void of Senſe and Life. But this is not a Character of the free and unbounded Spirit of a true Diſciple of Chriſt. There is an *Elaſtick* Power in the Soul of this Man, whereby it ſpreads and dilates itſelf on all Occaſions, as ſoon as Hindrances and Obſtacles are removed out of the Way. It will not ſuffer itſelf to be pent in and confined; it expands itſelf to a wide Circumference; it ſprings forth with a mighty Force, and will not be ſtopp'd. This is the admirable *Freedom* of the Soul. Or, to illuſtrate it yet farther in the Language of *Philoſophy*, and of the *Chymiſts*, who tell us, that there are *fine and ſubtile Spirits* ſhut up in all natural Bodies, and are ſometimes in the State of *Fixation*, i. e. they are deeply immerſed and impriſon'd in groſs Matter; but there is beſides this a State of *Fuſion*, i. e. when the ſpirituous Parts are ſeparating, and ſetting themſelves free from the ſluggiſh Body, wherein they are lock'd up; and laſtly, there is the State of *Volatility*, i. e. when the Spirits, after a Combate with the groſſer Parts, have ſo overcome them, that they are juſt upon the Wing, and ready to fly away; as it happens in Wine, when it is in the Height of its Fermentation, and in ſome Parts of our arterial Blood. Thus fares it alſo with the *Spirit of Man* (if I may compare great Things with thoſe that are mean;) ſometimes this finer and choicer Part of us is miſerably *fixed* to groſs Earth, and to the *Body of Death* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) the ſuperior Faculties are ſwallow'd up of the inferior; ſometimes again, this

Spirit begins to enfranchiſe itſelf, and by free and lively Acts of Grace to make Way for its Liberty; it ſtruggles with the groſſer Matter, and combates with the carnal Part; and, at length, by the gracious Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, it arrives to the higheſt Pitch of Freedom, which it is capable of in this Life. It conquers the inferior and groſſer Deſires of the Fleſh; and then the Holy Man acts wonderfully in Religion, he is fired with Zeal, he is fermented with Love, he is Active, he is Operative, he is all Spirit. Now, it is as vain an Enterprize to tie him down, as it was to bind *Sampſon* with new Cords. No Bands can maſter him; he carries away the Gates on his Shoulders; he removes all Oppoſitions and Difficulties, and nothing proves too hard for him. Now being ſo near a-kin to the exalted Spirits above, he is deſirous to be with them; he is almoſt impatient of his narrow Confinement; he ſeeks to enlarge his Horizon, to ſee beyond this World, and he would have all Things removed that hinder his Proſpect. *David*, had attain'd to this State of *Volatility*, when he cried out, *O that I had the Wings of a Dove, that I might flee away, and be at Reſt!* St. *Paul* had arrived to this when *he had a Deſire to depart*, (to be *ſet free* as the * original Word implies) *and to be with Chriſt*. Being winged with Faith and Hope, he ſtrove to mount upwards; he would needs bid adieu to Earth, and take his Flight to Heaven.

III. Having hitherto ſpoken of Chriſtian Liberty, as it is exerciſed about *good* or *evil Objects*, I will now (to make my Diſcourſe on this Subject more complete and entire, and to give you the full Extent of the Freedom purchaſed by the Son of God) conſider Chriſtian Liberty as it hath, for its Object, *indifferent Things*; Things that are circumſtantial and ritual, and have no intrinſick and real Goodneſs in them. This Liberty is two-fold, Firſt, from the *Legal* Ceremonies and *Moſaick* Rites; Secondly, as to Things that are of an *indifferent* Nature now under the *Goſpel*.

1. Chriſt hath ſet us free from all *ceremonial* and legal Obſervances; and this is no mean and inconſiderable Freedom, but is highly to be prized by all the Lovers of Chriſtian Simplicity. The burdenſome Uſages of the Law were ſuch a Yoke, as neither the Apoſtles nor their Forefathers were able to bear. The *Jews* were enſlav'd to their beggerly Elements; they were in perfect Bondage under the hard Impoſitions of the Moſaic Oeconomy. They were commanded to travel to *Jeruſalem* every Year, tho' their Habitations were never ſo far diſtant from it; they were enjoined very coſtly and expenſive Sacrifices, and they were conſtantly, and without Intermiſſion, tied to thoſe Oblations, They were confined and limited, as to their Meats and Drinks. Their Laws, relating to Uncleanneſs and Purification, were exceeding ſtrict and nice: In Brief, their Rites were both *numerous* and *uneaſy* to them. All this Vaſſalage and Slavery *we* are reſcued from, by the Coming of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. This is a very ſignal Inſtance of our *Chriſtian Liberty*, and therefore you find it often mentioned in the New Teſtament. *We, when we were Children,* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *were in Bondage under the Elements of the World,* (i. e. the Moſaick Rites;) *but when the Fulneſs of Time was come, God ſent forth his Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law* (ſubject to all its Rites and Ceremonies) *to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons,* and ſo be no longer like Children under thoſe ſorry Elements, *Gal.* iv. 3, 4. Here is the Charter for this Liberty. The Apoſtle, therefore, upbraids ſome judaizing Chriſtians of his Time after this Manner, *ver.* 9. *Now after that ye have known God, or rather are known of him, why turn ye again to the weak and beggerly Elements, whereunto ye deſire again to be in Bondage?* And in *Chap.* v. 1. he bids all thoſe that acknowledge Chriſtianity, to *ſtand faſt in the Liberty, wherewith Chriſt hath made them free, and not to be entangled again with the Yoke of Bondage.* The *Jews* were wilful Slaves, and there are many of them, at this Day, continue ſuch. Let us pity them, and pray for them, that they may be convinced of their Servitude and Vaſſalage, and may ſee at laſt what is the true Freedom which was purchaſed by the Meſſiah.

Now (bleſſed be God) Types and Shadows are vaniſh'd, ceremonial Obſervances are abrogated. Theſe Frames were ſerviceable for a Time, till Chriſtianity, a nobler Structure, was erected; but now thoſe Props and Supporters are uſeleſs: All that Moſaick Work is out of Faſhion; and he, who was in Scorn, call'd the *Carpenter* and the *Carpenter's Son*, hath ſet up a more glorious and laſting

* 'Αναλύσαι.

Fabrick in its Room. The *Jewiſh* Ceremonies, tho' they lived long, and in good Faſhion, yet expired at laſt, and becauſe they had been antient and honourable, as to their Author, they had (as St. *Auguſtine* expreſſes it) a handſome and decent Burial. But now, there is riſen, out of their Aſhes, a more ſprightly and lively Inſtitution. Now, God will be worſhipp'd *in Spirit and in Truth*; *in Spirit*, i. e. heartily, ſincerely, and from an inward Principle; *in Truth*, i. e. without Shadows and Types, and mere Reſemblances and Repreſentations, ſuch as the *Jewiſh* People were uſed to. The Goſpel-Worſhip is both real and ſpiritual. There are but two outward Rites inſtituted in the Church by Chriſt, *Baptiſm* and *the Lord's Supper*; whence we may infer, that the Chriſtian Religion is principally ſpiritual and inward. The Church of God, in its Minority, was ſchool'd and train'd up in ϛοιχεῖα (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) the *Elements* or *Rudiments* of the Moſaical Diſpenſation, and the ceremonial Law was their *Schoolmaſter* to bring them to Chriſt, to place them in a higher Form, to lead them to greater Improvements and Accompliſhments. Since the Sun of Righteouſneſs is riſen, and hath aſcended on high, and ſcatter'd his glorious Rays; theſe dark Rites are no more to be ſeen. They were *before* of the Nature of *indifferent Things*, but *now* we muſt not look upon them as ſuch.

2. There is a Freedom purchas'd for us under the *Goſpel*, as to the Uſe of *Things which are ſtill indifferent*. There are ſome Things of a middle Nature, the doing or not doing of which is left to our Diſpoſal, and is altogether in our Power; the Holy Scriptures, and the Chriſtian Laws, having no where determined us to either Side, but ſuffer'd us to do, as we think fit, in our *Chriſtian Prudence* and *Diſcretion*. By theſe, we ought to guide ourſelves in this Matter; theſe are our beſt Conduct in indifferent Things. St. *Paul* prays for the *Theſſalonians, that their Love may abound in Knowledge, and in all Judgment, and that they may approve Things that are excellent.* So we read it, but it may be tranſlated thus [*that ye may try Things that differ*] ſo both the Words in the *Original* are uſed in other Places of Scripture; and the Words following ſeem to abet this Interpretation, [*that ye may be without Offence till the Day of Chriſt*) that ye may neither ſtumble yourſelves, nor cauſe others to be offended. Your prudent Uſe of Things *indifferent*, and your knowing, wherein they *differ* from others, will admirably effect this. You may make Uſe of your Chriſtian Liberty in Matters that are of a middle Nature, ſuch as are neither commanded nor forbidden by the Word of God, but be very cautious, leſt you diſhonour God, and ſcandalize your Brethren, even in theſe Things. You muſt remember, that there is ſuch a Chriſtian Virtue as brotherly Compliance, and condeſcending to the Weak and Scrupulous. Conſult to this Purpoſe, 1 *Corinth.* x. 23. *All Things are lawful for me, but all Things are not expedient, all Things are lawful for me, but all Things edify not.* As if he had ſaid, if you aſk me whether theſe Things before-named, as eating Meat offer'd to Idols. *&c.* be lawful, I muſt needs tell you, that you have your Liberty, and the Goſpel doth not abſolutely reſtrain you. *An Idol is nothing*, and you need not trouble yourſelves about it; yet you muſt know, that though this eating of ſuch Things, and many other Actions, be lawful in themſelves, and abſtractly conſider'd, yet they are *not expedient*; they are not ſeemly and praiſe-worthy, in theſe Circumſtances; they do not become your Profeſſion, you may offend others, eſpecially weak ones, by acting thus; wherefore, you muſt be cautious, and not abuſe your Chriſtian Liberty. Let us, therefore, mind the ſame Apoſtle's Words, in the Epiſtle and Chapter fore-named, and *ver.* 31, 32. *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God. Give no Offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God* (*i. e.* to no well-diſpoſed Perſons who are tender and ſcrupulous, whether they be within the Church or without it) *even as I pleaſe all Men in all Things, not ſeeking my own Profit, but the Profit of many, that they may be ſaved.* More briefly he delivers this Caution, in 1 *Cor.* viii. 9. *Take heed leſt by any Means your Liberty become a ſtumbling Block to them that are weak.*

Again, as our Chriſtian Liberty may be moderated, and determined to one particular Side, by our great *Charity* towards thoſe that are *weak*, ſo it may likewiſe by the *Deference* we bear to *lawful Authority*. And let me tell you, this is the Short of all the Controverſies about indifferent Things. If you read a hundred Volumes about this Point, the Sum of them all is this, that there is purchaſed, by the Goſpel, a Freedom in indifferent Things; ſo that Chriſtians are not tied to one Side or other; and yet, notwithſtanding this, this Freedom may be ſuſpended on a double Account, firſt, for the avoiding of Scandal towards our weak Brethren. Thus, St. *Paul* would *eat no Fleſh whilſt the World ſtood, rather than offend his Brethren.* The Law of Charity and brotherly Love perſwaded him to this. Secondly, For the Sake of our Superiors, and to comply with Authority, we may, in ſome Caſes, let go that Liberty, which otherwiſe we might lawfully uſe. Rulers may determine our Liberty, in ſome indifferent Things. For they have *their Liberty* as well we ours, and the Goſpel hath given them a Freedom as well as us. Wherefore, there is Reaſon, that we ſhould comply out of Obedience to the Chriſtian Magiſtrate, no leſs than out of Charity to our weak Brother. We ought to do this, when we are ſatisfied, that the Determinations and Injunctions of our Superiors, about thoſe indifferent Things, are for the *publick Good,* for *Edification,* for *Peace* and *Concord* (which cannot be without a *general Conſent*) for the *Glory of God,* and the *Honour of Religion.* But ſtill the Things determined, and enjoined, remain *in their own Nature indifferent*; Chriſtian Liberty leaves us the free Uſe of them, in themſelves, conſidered, ſo that our Conſciences are not reſtrain'd and tied up. This is one Privilege derived to all Chriſtians, by the Coming of Chriſt. And thus you ſee, wherein *Chriſtian Liberty* conſiſts. I have endeavoured to diſplay it in its ſeveral Parts, which, I hope, hath given you ſome good Account of this important Subject.

In the next Place, I am to be employ'd in the *Application* of what hath been deliver'd; where I ſhall have Occaſion offer'd me of adding ſomething more, concerning the Nature of this grand Prerogative of *Chriſtian Liberty.* I will reduce all to theſe two Inferences, 1. Have right Notions of this evangelical Freedom. 2. Be thankful to God for it.

1. *Have right Notions, form due Conceptions of your Chriſtian Liberty.* It was to this End, that I have endeavoured to explain the true Nature of it, and to give you the ſeveral Lines and diſtinct Proportions of ſo excellent a Piece. Be not miſtaken concerning the true Liberty of Chriſtians, and the rather, becauſe the Miſtake here is very *frequent,* and, let me tell you, it is as *dangerous.* The Apoſtle gives it as one Mark of falſe Teachers and Seducers, that they *promiſe* their Diſciples *Liberty,* 2 Pet. ii. 19. The Liberty cannot be right, where the Notion of it is falſe; therefore, we are concerned to have true Apprehenſions of this Thing. Accordingly, we muſt know this, that the Freedom, wherewith Chriſt hath made us free, hath nothing of Licentiouſneſs, or lawleſs Liberty, in it. We muſt by no Means imagine, that it is a Freedom from the Obligation of the Law of Nature and right Reaſon, from the Dictates of the Moral Law, as it is a Rule of Obedience. A late Writer dreams of a *State of Nature,* wherein there is a Freedom to every Thing. All Perſons, even Parents and their Children, are born equal, and may do what they will in this State. Nothing is juſt or unjuſt, but every one is left uncontrollable. This is a groſs Fancy, and no Man of conſiſtent Thoughts can imagine, that all Perſons are born with a Liberty to do what they will. There is a certain eſtabliſh'd Law of Nature, or Reaſon, which we are all oblig'd to obſerve; to be freed from this is *carnal Liberty,* and not that which was purchas'd for us by our Saviour. For he tells us directly, that *he came not to deſtroy the Law, but to fulfil it.* The Decalogue is the Sum of the Law; he came not to deſtroy and null this, but to add to it, to improve, compleat, and fill up the Precepts of it. The *Commandments* are larger (tho' it is true alſo they are ſtricter) than they were thought to be before, as is plain from Chriſt's Comment upon them, and from his Reproving and Confuting the corrupt Gloſſes of the *Jews.* Thoſe are ſtrange *Licentiates* in Divinity, who maintain, that the *Goſpel* hath abrogated *Morality,* and that the *Ten Commandments* belong not to *Chriſtians.* This was not the Doctrine of our Bleſſed Maſter, and therefore we are to reject it.

But may not Believers be ſaid to be freed from the moral Law? Yes, and that theſe three Ways, (which will yet give you a further Account of the *Chriſtian Liberty*; and, in this Place, it was moſt proper to inſert theſe Things.) 1. They are freed from the *rigorous Exaction of the moral Law, i. e.* from complete Obedience to it. The Law requires ſinleſs and perfect Conformity to it: But we not being under the Law, but under Grace, we are not bound to yield perfect Obedience to the moral Precepts of the Law; but our imperfect Performances are accepted of God for Chriſt's Sake. Under the evangelical Diſpenſation, the Imperfections of Works are ſupplied by Mercy and Pardon in Chriſt, the Redeemer, by the free Grace and Favour of Heaven. The Court of *Chancery* (as I may ſo ſpeak) is erected under the Goſpel: Equity and Mildneſs prevail: Severe Juſtice and Rigour have no Place. 2. Chriſt hath releaſed us from the moral Law, as it is *a Covenant of Works*, and conſequently from *Juſtification* by it. See your Charter for this Liberty in *Acts* xiii. 38, 39. *Be it known unto you, Brethren, that through this Man* (Chriſt) *is preached unto you the Forgiveneſs of your Sins, and by him all that believe are juſtified from all Things from which ye could not be juſtified by the Law of* Moſes. For this, the Apoſtle's Words are peremptory in *Gal.* ii. 16. *A Man is not juſtified by the Works of the Law, but by the Faith of Jeſus Chriſt: For by the Works of the Law ſhall no Fleſh be juſtified.* And again, Chap. iii. 11. *That no Man is juſtified by the Law in the Sight of God, it is evident, for the Juſt ſhall live by Faith.* And the whole Epiſtle to the *Galatians* is a Proof and Confirmation of this Goſpel Freedom. As for the contrary Aſſertion, it is no other than a plain enervating of the Goſpel, and a downright baffling of the Doctrine of Faith in Chriſt Jeſus. Chriſt hath fulfill'd the Law for us, and his perfect Obedience is imputed to us. But we are exempted from performing exact Obedience, and conſequently we can do nothing to procure our *Juſtification*. 3. Chriſt hath freed his Servants from the Law, as to its *Curſe and Condemnation*, i. e. the *Puniſhment* which follows the Breach of the Law, even the moral Law. Death was denounced againſt all that yield not abſolute and entire Obedience to all the Precepts of this Law: But this Denunciation, this Threatning is nulled by Chriſt. *The Law was not made*, in this Senſe, *for the Righteous:* For, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *againſt ſuch there is no Law:* The Law hath no Menaces and Curſes to denounce againſt ſuch: Or rather, through the mild and ſweet Diſpenſation of Mercy and Grace in Chriſt Jeſus, Believers are freed from the Puniſhment of the Law. Thus you ſee, in what Senſe we are freed from the moral Law, *viz.* from perfect Obedience to it, from being juſtified by it, notwithſtanding our ſtricteſt Performances, and from being condemned by it, notwithſtanding our greateſt Failings and Offences. But ſtill this remains true, that the *Chriſtian Liberty* gives no ſuch Diſpenſation, as to releaſe us from our Obligation to the Commands of the moral Law. This ſtill is, and ever ſhall be a Rule of our Lives and Manners. Away then with the fond and blaſphemous Tenents of the *Antinomians*, and looſe *Libertines*, who in a worſe Senſe than *Moſes* break the two Tables, throw away the Commandments, and talk wholly of the Satisfaction which Chriſt hath wrought, and the Works which he performed, and vilify all inherent and perſonal Righteouſneſs, and are very urgent with all Men to think meanly of it. But of theſe bold Men St. *Peter* ſeems to have ſpoken in his 1 *Epiſt. Ch.* ii. 19. *While they promiſe you Liberty, they themſelves are the Servants of Corruption:* As much as to ſay, this is a *falſe Freedom* which they allure you with, they make you *Servants*, and the worſt of Servants; you come, by liſtening to them, to ſerve your Luſts and Corruptions, you give Way to all Sin and Lewdneſs. Let me expoſtulate with theſe Men in the Words of the Apoſtle, *Shall we ſin becauſe we are not under the Law but under Grace? God forbid.* Is not a more exact Holineſs requir'd of thoſe who live under the clear Light of the Goſpel, than of the Perſons who were under the dark Types and Shadows of the Law? Was not the Chriſtian Religion deſign'd to be a Rule of our Lives and Practices? Doth it not teach us to live Soberly, Righteouſly and Godlily, and to adorn our Converſation with all Virtues and Graces of the Spirit? Is not a Believer *created in Chriſt unto good Works, that he ſhould walk therein?* Doth not our Religion bid us tie the Knot hard on our looſe Deſires and Appetites, to curb our Luſts, and to reſtrain all ſinful and immoral Practices?

Underſtand then aright, what the *evangelical Liberty* is, and have true Conceptions of it. Be not abuſed and deceived with falſe Repreſentations of this excellent Privilege; make it neither wider nor ſtraiter than it is. I have endeavour'd to ſet it before you, in its true Proportions, I have told you what it is, and I have informed you alſo what it is not. In *general*, I have acquainted you that it is not a Freedom from the Obligation to the moral Law; I might now add more *particularly*, that Chriſtian Liberty doth not exclude the Laws and Injunctions of Magiſtrates (as ſome have fondly maintained) it doth not exempt us from being ſubject to Authority, and obedient to the Commands of Superiors.

If you read the 1 *Cor.* vii. 20. *&c.* you will be ſatisfied that the Liberty, which the Goſpel inſtated the *Corinthians* in, conſiſted very well with the *Condition of Servants*, and conſequently the ſame Liberty is not inconſiſtent with the Obedience to *Maſters*, and, by the ſame Reaſon, to all other Governors, Civil or Eccleſiaſtical. Therefore ſome *Anabaptiſts* and others, who have thought themſelves freed from Obedience to Magiſtrates, and have dream'd that this is Part of their *Chriſtian Freedom*, are juſtly to be blamed, as Perſons that underſtand not aright, what the Evangelical Liberty is. There were ſuch as theſe in St. *Peter*'s Time, and I pray obſerve how he treats them. *Firſt*, he lays before them their indiſpenſable Duty, and exhorts them to the Obſervance of it, *Submit your ſelves* (ſaith he) *to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's ſake, whether it be to the King as Supreme, or unto Governors, as unto them that are ſent by him for the Puniſhment of Evil-doers*, &c. 1 Pet. ii. 13. And then he lets them know, that this Submiſſion, which he exhorts them to, doth not infringe their Chriſtian Liberty, *As free* (ſaith he) *and not uſing your Liberty for a Cloak of Maliciouſneſs, but as the Servants of God*, v. 16. As if he had ſaid, you may ſerve God, and yet be ſubject to your Rulers: One doth not exclude the other. You may preſerve your Chriſtian Freedom entire, and yet be obedient to your Superiors. By no means perſwade your ſelves, that the Doctrine of Goſpel Liberty is inconſiſtent with your Compliance with the Laws of Civil Goverrors, for theſe are of God's Appointment, though in ſome Reſpects they are the Ordinance of Man.

2 My next *Inference* is this, Thank God for this unſpeakable Gift, this high Privilege of Believers, which I have been diſcourſing of. Look back on the ſeveral Particulars which I have enlarged upon, and reſent, with the deepeſt Gratitude, ſo pregnant and manifold a Bleſſing, a Freedom from Sin, and all the evil Attendants and Conſequences of it, a Freedom from the Guilt, and from the Dominion of Sin: A Freedom from inordinate Affections, and Slavery to the World's Pleaſures, Honours and Riches; a Freedom from an unworthy Fear of the World's Frowns, Croſſes, and Calamities; a Freedom from the Evil and Sting of every Affliction; a Freedom from the Power and Captivity of the Devil, and from his Tyranny over our Souls and Bodies: A Freedom from the Fear of Puniſhment and the Divine Wrath: A Freedom from the fear of Death, both Spiritual and Temporal. Beſides, more poſitively, you muſt with all Thankfulneſs call to mind your Freedom at the Throne of Grace; your free, open and ſincere Temper which the Goſpel Principles endue you with, and likewiſe that free willing and chearful Spirit which is beſtow'd upon you, whereby you are inabled to diſcharge all the Duties of Chriſtianity with Pleaſure and Delight. And laſtly, you muſt not forget your Deliverance from the heavy and burdenſome Yoke of Ceremonies, which the antient Church of God among the *Jews*, and even the *Chriſtians* for ſome Time, groaned under, as a Yoke which they were not able to bear. And you are to bleſs God that all Reſtraints and Impoſitions, as to *indifferent* Matters in Religion, are taken away by the Goſpel, and you have Leave to make uſe of ſome Things, or to let them alone, as you ſee Occaſion. Thus, you have abundant Matter of *Thankſgiving*. See then, that you gratefully acknowledge this matchleſs Liberty, eſpecially that Part of it which I firſt inſiſted upon, the Freedom from Sin and Guilt, the Deliverance from thoſe Luſts and Vices whereby ſo many are inſlaved and captivated. This is that *glorious Liberty of the Sons of God*, which they can never ſufficiently value and eſteem. To raiſe your Hearts to a becoming Thankfulneſs to God for ſo unparallel'd a Favour, I will paſs to the next Thing remarkable in the Words.

The *ſecond Propoſition* which I founded on them was this, that the Freedom which Chriſt hath purchaſed for Believers, is no imaginary and counterfeit Thing, but really True and Solid. *If the Son ſhall make you Free, ye ſhall be Free indeed.* There is a Sort of Freedom, which ſome boaſt of, which rather deſerves the Name of Bondage. *Cataline* call'd all thoſe *Slaves* that would not be Parricides and Traitors to their Country. The *Turks* ſay they wear long Beards in Token of their *Freedom*: Thus the greateſt Slaves fancy they are Free, and ſhew ſome Badges of it. There is a * Word in *Latin*, which ſignifies *to Affirm* and *to make Free.* Some Men *confidently ſay* they are *Free*, and then they think they are *ſo*. A falſe and adulterate Freedom paſſes too commonly for that which is True and Genuine. This we ſee in every Sinner; he dreams of Liberty when he is an arrant

* *Aſſerere.*

rant Vaſſal. But it is the virtuous and righteous Man only, who is *Free indeed*. The former Liberty is fantaſtick and ſeign'd, but the latter hath a real Being and Exiſtence: The one is Equivocal and Nominal, the other is Subſtantial and Real.

Here then I will ſhew you in the firſt Place, that we were *Slaves and Bondmen*, and, after that, I will lead you to a particular Underſtanding of the *Manner of our being made Free*: And from both it will evidently appear, that our *Liberty* is *True* and *Real*. Outward Bondage and Slavery are wont to be introduced ſeveral Ways, by *Birth*, by *voluntary Subjection*, by *Force* and *Captivity*: And by the like Means the inward and ſpiritual Slavery is brought upon us.

1. Slavery comes by *Birth*. Thus the *Children* of Slaves are *born* Slaves, and theſe by the Civil Lawyers are ſtiled *Vernæ*, to diſtinguiſh them from other Kinds. It is true, it is diſputed by the ſame Civilians, whether there be any *Slaves in Nature*: And, according to their Definition of *Servitude*, it ſeems to be carried in the Negative, for it is defined by them * a Conſtitution of the Law of Nations, whereby a Man is ſubject to the Dominion of another, againſt Nature: And, I remember it is ſaid, that Manumiſſion is not the *Giving of Liberty*, but the *Diſcovering* of it only, becauſe Liberty, which is of the Law of Nature, cannot be taken away by the Law of Nations, although by the Law of Nations it was hid and conceal'd. Hence are thoſe Maxims in the Civil Law, * Liberty is from Nature, but Servitude from the Law of Nations: According to the Law of Nature all Men are alike. But notwithſtanding this, it is evident that by common Uſe, derived from the Law of Nations, ſome Perſons are *born in Slavery*, and come into the World (as I may ſo ſay) in *Chains*. In a higher and a ſpiritual Senſe, it may be concluded of all Mankind, that they are *Slaves by Birth*, for our firſt Parents fell from their Innocency and Happineſs, and with them their whole Race was brought into Bondage and Miſery. They are *by Nature Servants* unto Sin, which is implied by the Apoſtle, when, ſpeaking even of himſelf, and other regenerate Perſons, he ſaith, they were * *by Nature the Children of Wrath*, for they could not be ſo unleſs they were likewiſe *by Nature Sinners*, for the Wrath of God is due to Sin only. The Corruption of the firſt Man is derived and propagated to all his Poſterity, and hereby they are fatally inclin'd to ſerve their Luſts, and to be in Bondage to Satan: And, unleſs the free Spirit of God ſet them at Liberty, they will continue in this State of Slavery to their Lives End, and deſcend into the Grave with it.

* *Conſtitutio juris gentium qua quis dominio alieno contra naturam ſubjicitur.*

† *Libertas eſt a natura, Servitus a jure gentium: Secundum jus naturæ omnes homines ſunt æquales.* Inſtitut. l. 1. Tit. 3.

* ii. Eph. 3.

2. Slavery comes by *voluntary Obedience and Subjection*; and this is the Effect of a ſlaviſh Temper, a couchant and ſervile Spirit, when Men are ſo ſottiſh as to affect Drudgery, and are fit for nothing elſe, and cannot employ themſelves, in any ingenious Way. And this is another Way, whereby, in a ſpiritual Senſe, we become Slaves and Bond-men, we are, *willing* to be Slaves. For great Numbers are there, who voluntarily ſubject themſelves to the Service of Sin and Satan? Theſe poor Villains, firſt by *Deſcent*, (of which before) and then by *Choice* and *Tenure*, have their Perſons and all that belongs to them liable to be diſpoſed of, at the Will of their Lords. They follow their baſe and ſervile Temper, their vile and degenerate Diſpoſition: And all the pathetick Invitations to Freedom ſignify nothing with them. By their good Wills they would never quit their baſe Condition, they would always be kept in Durance, they fall in love with their Bonds and Fetters. *Know ye not*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that to whom ye yield yourſelves Servants to obey, his Servants ye are to whom ye obey?* Rom. vi. 16. Willing and Unforced Obedience to Satan is the undeniable Proof of Servitude and Slavery *He that commits Sin* (i. e. wilfully gives himſelf up to the Practice of it) *is a Servant of Sin*, as our Saviour tells thoſe *Jews* in the Verſe but one before my Text. The Sinner, like Ahab, *ſells himſelf*, to work Wickedneſs, and he will not be *redeem'd*. And this was another Way among the Nations of making Slaves, *viz. by Sale*; they uſed to be ſold in the Market. The wretched Sinner accordingly is *ſold under Sin*, Rom. vii. 14. A Freeman might ſell himſelf, and ſo become a Servant: Thus the Sinner *inſlaves himſelf*, he becomes the Devil's Servant by *Bargain* and *Sale*.

3. Servitude and Bondage come by *Force* and *Compulſion*, as when Perſons are *conquer'd*, and ſo taken *Captive*. Theſe are call'd Servants *a ſervando*, becauſe they are taken and ſaved in War. And even in this Manner too the *Slavery of Sin* is contracted: To which Saint *Peter* plainly alludes, in his 2 *Epiſtle Chap.* ii.19. where, ſpeaking of the Servants of *Corruption*, he adds immediately, *of whom a Man is overcome, of the ſame is he brought in Bondage.* The *ſpiritual Bondage* commenceth upon *Conqueſt*. Now this Conqueſt and Captivity are made firſt by Satan: For it is expreſly ſaid of Sinners, that they *are taken Captive by him at his Will*, 2 *Tim.* ii. 5. They are *Præda Belli* (as the Civil Law ſpeaks) which is plain *Captivating*. They are now tamely *led* by the Conqueror which Way he pleaſeth: He hath the ſole Command of them, he rules in theſe Children of Diſobedience, and they have no Power to reſiſt him. Like the *Centurion*, he bids one go, and he goeth, and another come, and he cometh, and a third do that, and he doth it. He bids this Man be Lewd and Laſcivious, and indulge thoſe fleſhly Luſts which war againſt the Soul, and he doth it. He bids another Man be Intemperate and Debauched, and he preſently obeys his Commands. He bids a third Curſe and Swear, and his Injunctions are forthwith complied with. He bids a fourth Cheat, and Couzen, and Lye, and 'tis done with an incredible Expedition and Alacrity. But you may remember what St. *James* ſaith, *a Man, when he is tempted, is drawn away of his own Luſts.*

Secondly therefore, this Captivity is made not only by Satan; but the Sinners themſelves: And the Former could not be without this Latter. But this you will ſay is *Voluntary*, and therefore cannot be call'd a *Captivity* or *Conqueſt*. They ſin voluntarily, I confeſs, but yet withall there is a Kind of Force and Neceſſity upon them, to commit Sin: Yet it is not ſuch a Neceſſity as will excuſe them, but will mightily aggravate their Condemnation. For they have, by accuſtoming themſelves to Sin, brought themſelves into ſuch a Condition, that they cannot forbear ſinning. St. Peter deciphering the prophane and blaſphemous Seducers, who were ſhortly to appear in the World, acquaints the Chriſtans whom he writ to, that this was Part of their Character, *they have Eyes full of Adultery, and that cannot ceaſe from Sin.* 2 *Peter.* ii. 14. By their long indulging their Luſts they are *neceſſitated* at laſt to comply with all their Motions, and they cannot help it: They have no Power to make any Reſiſtance. * *Slavery* and *Impotency* go together; Men diſable themſelves, by frequent and conſtant Commiſſion of Sin: They become Weak and Feeble, and the Spirit is eaſily overcome, and at laſt quite ſtifled by the Fleſh. No ſooner doth the Devil plant his Artillery againſt them, but they yield up their Fort; no ſooner doth he ſollicit them, but they readily comply with him, and ſometimes they even tempt the Tempter. And thus you ſee, that by the ſeveral Ways, whereby *Bondage* is introduced, *Sinners* are made *Slaves*, *viz.* by Birth, by Obedincee, by Sale, by Captivity, by Conqueſt.

* Τὸ δοῦλον ἀσθενές. Euripid.

Now I will alſo ſhew you that the Regenerate and Faithful are made *Free*, by the like Ways and Methods whereby Freedom is obtain'd amongſt Men, and by ſome others likewiſe.

1*ſt*. As Slavery is introduced, ſo it is ſometimes anulled by *Force*; and the Perſons, who were in Bondage, are ſet free by the *Conqueſt* of thoſe, whoſe Captives they are. Thus *Abraham* reſcued *Lot* and his Retinue. Thus Victors releaſe thoſe poor and diſtreſſed Perſons, who had been taken before by the Enemy. In a reſembling Manner enſlaved Sinners are freed by the Almighty Power and Victorious Arm of the Bleſſed Redeemer. An *Extraordinary* Inſtance of this we have in St. *Paul*, who was *Mad* (as he ſaith of himſelf) in his perſecuting the Church, but when he was in his full Career, and in the Midſt of all his Plots and Projects againſt the Servants of Chriſt, and when no Human Force could ſtop him, he on a ſudden was diſmounted, and ſtruck down to the Ground. This was an eminent Inſtance of the Glorious *Conqueſt* of the Captain of your Salvation. And this *Force* was a real *Freedom*, for he was made willing in this Day of Divine Power. To be had thus in Triumph is as good, as to be a Victor. The Captive here *follows* without being *drawn*; The Priſoner is his own Keeper, as it fared with *Joſeph* in *Egypt*: Here the Captive is not aſhamed of his Chains; his very Bonds are Ornaments. Bleſſed is the Perſon that hath felt ſuch a Power: He eſteems it as a moſt welcome Freedom.

2. As *Servitude* comes by *Birth*, ſo likewiſe by *Birth* Men are Free. Such among the *Romans* were call'd *Ingenui*, * Free-born: By being born of Free Parents, they became Free. But it is not enough for Believers to be *born of* Chriſtian Parents; they muſt be born again. It is the *New-Birth* that makes them *Free*. Then they are truly term'd *Ingenui*; a New Nature and Principle, is inſuſed into them, a Free Spirit is implanted in them, whereby they act ingenuouſly and worthily in all the Duties of Religion.

** Ingenuus eſt qui ſtatim ut natus eſt, liber eſt.*

There is an obſcure Paſſage in *Rev.* ii. 17. which it is probable hath Reference not only to this Sort of Freedom, but ſome others which I mentioned before. *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden Manna, and will give him a white Stone, and in that Stone, a new Name written, which no Man knoweth ſaving he that receiveth it.* Theſe Words may perhaps have a Relation to the *Chriſtian Freedom by Conqueſt*, for I can prove out of good Authors, that the white Stone among the *Agoniſts* was a Teſtimony of Conqueſt, a Reward of Victory: To him therefore that *overcometh*, is this Reward given. And withall, the Victor's *Name* was written on the *Stone*, as might be proved out of the Antients. Or, take this as another Account of that Myſtical Paſſage of Scripture: The Words ſeem to allude to ſomething in the *Roman Cuſtom* of *making their Servants Free:* The Servants, at the Time of their Manumiſſion, uſed to receive from their Maſter, if not a white Stone, yet a *white Garment*, and they had a *new Name* added to their former. Or, thoſe Words may refer to the *Calculi* uſed in Judiciary Caſes among the *Greeks* and *Romans*, where a white Stone was given for Abſolution, and a black One for Condemnation. And ſo the *Spiritual Freedom from Condemnation*, which I ſpoke of before, is here alluded to. *I will give a white Stone*, that is, I will abſolve him. Or, laſtly, this Place may have Relation to the *Calculi*, or Stones which were in uſe of old among the *Romans*; they choſe *Magiſtrates* and *Officers* with them, as is well known: And there was no Man knew who had the white Stone, which had the *Name* of the Magiſtrates then elected, but the Perſon himſelf, till at laſt all was made publick. You may make Choice of which of theſe antient Uſages you pleaſe, to expound the forecited Text by, for they all of them more or leſs illuſtrate the Nature of the *Chriſtian Liberty* I have been diſcourſing of: And even with Reference to the Law it may be, it is ſaid here, to the Believers of the Church of *Pergamos*, that they ſhall have a White Stone, and a *New Name* given them, which are a Token of their *Spiritual Advancement and Liberty*; For now they are made fit for an *Honourable Employment*, now they are, as it were, exalted to *Magiſtracy* and *Dignity*, they can by no means brook the Service of Sin, which is baſe and vile. This is that Free and Ingenuous Spirit, which goes along with the Chriſtian Freedom; this is that *Spirit of Life*, which St *Paul* ſpeaks of in *Rom.* viii. 2. *The Law of the Spirit of Life, in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made me free from the Law of Sin and Death.* Here is your Charter for this Liberty: Read it and highly prize it. And again, 2 *Cor.* iii. 17. *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty.* Where there is this Spiritual Principle, this Inward Life, this Regenerate Nature, this New Name, this New Birth, there is true Freedom. Believers are made Free by being born again.

3. Freedom was obtain'd of old, by Gift and *Cooptation, viz.* When Freedom was beſtow'd on Strangers, and thoſe of other *Nations*, then they were ſaid to be *civitate donati*. Thus whole Cities, and Nations ſometimes, were taken in by the Old *Romans* to be made Free. This was call'd *Jus Civitatis*, the Freedom whereby Foreigners came to be Free Denizens; that is, to have as much Right to the Privileges of the Place as the Natives. *We* call this *Naturalization*, the *French Enfranchiſement*, and the *Turks* ſtile it, the being a *Muſſulman* or Believer. This Freedom is generally an Act of Grace and Favour, and conferr'd out of mere Kindneſs. In a reſembling Manner, all true Believers are made free by ſpiritual Cooptation and Grace, by the free Vouchſafement and Donation of Chriſt Jeſus. *The Grace of God*, ſaith the Apoſtle, and *the Gift by Grace, which is by one Man, Jeſus Chriſt, hath abounded unto many*, Rom. v. 15. This is that which, in the Stile of the New Teſtament, is call'd *Adoption*, which was another uſual Way amongſt the Antients of making Perſons free. *Adoption* always carried *Freedom* with it; and therefore moſt appoſitely doth St. *Paul* diſtinguiſh between the *Spirit of Bondage*, and the *Spirit of Adoption*, in that known Place which I had Occaſion to mention before.

4. Freedom came by *Manumiſſion*, which was grounded upon *Apprentiſhip* or Service under a Maſter. Theſe were call'd by the *Romans*, † *Liberti* and *Libertini*, ſuch who ſerved for their Freedom. By this Way alſo may Believers be ſaid to be made *Free*, (*viz.*) by becoming *the Servants of Righteouſneſs*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks in vi *Rom.* 18, 19. Moſt remarkable are our Saviour's Words to this Purpoſe, in the Chapter wherein my Text is, v. 31, 32. *If ye continue in my Words, then are ye my Diſciples indeed, and ye ſhall know the Truth, and the Truth ſhall make you Free.* As if he had ſaid, See that ye conſtantly and faithfully practiſe all my Commands, and live according to my Directions, and ſo ye will undeniably demonſtrate to the World, that you are my Followers: And beſides, let me tell you, your Knowledge ſhall be wonderfully increas'd and improved by your ſincere Practice: And (which is another Encouragement to you) you ſhall purchaſe an ineſtimable *Freedom*, by knowing and ſerving me, for my Service is perfect *Freedom*. Your very diſcharging of your Duty is the Way to be reſcued from Bondage and Slavery. Your Religion is a *Reaſonable Service*, and it will prove eaſy and pleaſant, if you ſeriouſly mind it: you will find Nothing ſo Free and *Facile*, as Chriſtianity: You will be bound with no other Cords, but thoſe of Love; you will really experience, that your Employment is your Reward, that your Work is your Wages, that your Task is its own Salary, that your Labour is your Pay, in Sum, that your Religion is your greateſt Happineſs and Freedom.

† *Liberti, qui ex juſta ſervitute manumiſſi ſunt.* Juſtin. Inſt.

And you muſt not only *do*, but *ſuffer*, and reckon this the Way to Freedom. You read in the Sacred Hiſtory, that *Jacob* ſerved two Apprentiſhips, that he might be Free at laſt. This young patient Lover contentedly bore ſo many Summers Heats, and Winters colds, to purchaſe this great Privilege in the Cloſe of all. Much more do *Chriſtians*, by *ſuffering*, become *Free*: By Difficulties and Hardſhips, they arrive at this Bleſſing. It was a Cuſtom among the *Romans*, that when the Maſter manumitted his *Servants*, he uſed to ſhove and thruſt him from him, with Violence, and to ſtrike him on the Ear: And the *Prætor* too, before whom he was preſented, lay'd a Rod on his Head, and the *Lictor* likewiſe, the Mayor's Under-Officer, ſtruck the Servant on his Head, and puſh'd him on the Back, and dealt very roughly with him; and then he was enter'd into the Regiſter, for a *Free-man, more Quiritum*. You may eaſily apply it: The *Chriſtian*, before he be admitted the Lord's Free-man, muſt be content to meet with ill Uſage, to go through many Tribulations, to feel the Stroke of the Rod, and to be acquainted with Troubles and Perſecutions from the World; and then at length he ſhall be *vindicta liberatus*, he may be ſaluted a *Free-man indeed, more Chriſtianorum*.

5. Men uſually *buy* their Freedom. *With a great Sum obtain'd I this Freedom*, ſaid the Chief Captain to St *Paul*. What is more evident, than that even our *Spiritual Freedom* is by *Purchaſe* ¿ Chriſt Jeſus hath pay'd the full Price for our Ranſom. *Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as Silver and Gold, from your vain Converſation receiv'd by Tradition from your Fathers, but with the precious Blood of Chriſt, as of a Lamb without Blemiſh and without Spot.* 1 *Pet.* i. 18, 19. Thus the Spiritual Freedom is gain'd: It is by *Redemption*, it is by laying out a Price, even the Life of the Bleſſed Jeſus the Son of God.

Laſtly, Freedom is wont to be convey'd and ratify'd by *Writing* and *Indenture*. Behold, this Tranſcendent Freedom, I have been ſpeaking of, is confirm'd to Believers after the ſame Manner. This indeed I have been making good throughout my Diſcourſes on this Subject, I have been producing the *Deeds* and *Conveyances*, the *Inſtruments* and *Evidences*, and *Royal Charters* which contain the Goſpel-Liberty, I mean the Holy Scriptures, eſpecially the Writings of the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles. Here is the *perfect Law of Liberty*; here you may inform yourſelf concerning the ſeveral Particulars which I have tendered to you. And blame me not that I have ſo *abundantly* aſſerted the Chriſtian's Right to Liberty. We cannot have *too many Titles* unto that which can never to be *too much valued*.

And thus I have finiſhed a great Part of my Task; I have endeavoured to clear the Notion of Evangelical Liberty, by explaining it according to the Senſe and Acception of the Word according to the Cuſtoms and Uſages of Nations. And I hope, this way of treating on this Subject is not offenſive unto any. If I thought it were, I ſhould clear it from all Exception, and ſhew you that it is not ſo much *my* Method and Way of handling this Doctrine, as 'tis the Apoſtle St. *Paul's*, for 'tis worth your Obſervation, that he, after he had treated largely of the *Servitude of Sin*, and the *Freedom of Righteouſ-*

neſs, in the vi. Chapter to the *Romans*, he adjoins theſe Words, v. 19. *I ſpeak after the Manner of Men, becauſe of the Infirmity of your Fleſh.* Where by *ſpeaking after the Manner of Men*, he means, I ſuppoſe, this which he uſes here, namely, Explaining this Subject by vulgar Similitudes taken from *Maſters* and *Servants*: He illuſtrates the Doctrine of Chriſtian *Freedom from Sin*, and the *Bondage under it*, by thoſe things which belong to the Condition of *Free-men* and *Servants*. And this is the very thing which I have done in this Diſcourſe. I have endeavoured to ſet forth to you the Nature and Quality of your Spiritual Bondage and Liberty, by thoſe common Accidents which appertain to the Slavery and Freedom among Men. I preſume, you are well ſatisfied that the one is fitly explained by the other. And I hope, by this time, you do not doubt of the *Truth* and *Reality* of that Freedom which my Text commends unto you. *If the Son ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.* From the Doctrine which theſe Words have afforded us, let me preſent you with theſe following *Inferences*, 1. Be in Love with Chriſtianity which confers ſo high a Privilege upon you, as *Freedom*, 2. Be thoroughly perſwaded of this great Truth, and live always in the Senſe of it. 3. You, that have arrived to this Freedom, be careful to maintain it. 4 You, that are not yet in Poſſeſſion of it, uſe your utmoſt Endeavours to arrive to it: And here I will further aſſiſt you by ſome plain Directions.

1. Be in Love with Chriſtianity which is the only Freedom. There are *Several Motives* and *Encouragements* to Godlineſs, as its *Profit*, its *Eaſineſs*, its *Pleaſantneſs*, its *Joy*, and the like; but this, which I am now treating of, is as powerful a Motive as any. What greater Encouragement can you have to come unto Chriſt, and affectionately to embrace his Holy Inſtitution, than This? Our Saviour himſelf made this very Uſe of the Doctrine, *Mat.* xi 28. *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you Reſt. Take my Yoke upon you, for my Yoke is eaſy, and my Burthen is light:* Men are afraid of Chriſtianity, becauſe they think it is a *Yoke*; it is accompanied with *Subjection* and *Slavery*: There are (they ſay) inſuperable Difficulties that attend it: They ſhall always be in Bondage, and live Uneaſily and Hardly. But our Saviour convinces them of the contrary, and lets them know that his *Yoke* is eaſy to be born; there is the greateſt *Freedom* in Chriſtianity; Godlineſs lays no *Reſtraint* upon any innocent and harmleſs Deſires; there is no *Confinement* in it, which is not highly reaſonable and accountable. *Liberty* is the moſt deſirable thing, and Chriſt hath purchas'd this for us, and no Man can take it from us; I beſeech you then be invited to leave the Service of Satan, and to make Chriſt your Maſter, and to adhere to his Holy Laws. If you love *Liberty*, you muſt needs love the *Chriſtian Religion*, for this is the only Parent and Promoter of it.

2. From what hath been deliver'd on theſe Words be thoroughly perſwaded of this, and live in the Senſe of it, that all *Sin* is *Slavery*, and that there is no *true Freedom* but in *Holineſs* and *Righteouſneſs*. It was a Paradox ſtiffly maintain'd of old by the *Stoicks* * that Wiſe-men are the only Free-men, and that Fools and vicious Perſons are Slaves. The *Chriſtian Philoſophy* aſſerts the very ſame. This is that which the bleſſed Author of our Religion dictates to us in the Text. It is a Notion convey'd to us both by the Principles of *Reaſon* and of the *Goſpel*. Give me Leave to obſerve (to *you* eſpecially who are Perſons of ſome Study and Reading, whom I ſhall oftentimes in this Place invite to the Study of Chriſtianity and the Practice of Godlineſs, even from the Principles and Maxims of Heathen Writers, which cannot ſeem to be impertinent in a *Chriſtian Auditory*, when it ſhall be remember'd that the Great Apoſtle St. *Paul*, who profeſſes he made not uſe of the *enticing Wards of Man's Wiſdom*, thought fit to inſert into his Sermons and Epiſtles Quotations out of the *Greek Poets*; give me Leave, I ſay, to obſerve to you, that this excellent Notion concerning the Servitude of Sin and Vice, and the Freedom which attends Virtue and Goodneſs, is to be found in the beſt *Pagan* Authors.

The Great *Roman* Orator diſcourſes fater this brave and lofty Manner, † "What is *Liberty* but a Power to live as a Man will?
" Who then may be ſaid to live as he will, but he that follows
" thoſe Things which are right, he who delights in his Duty, he
" whoſe Way of Life is conſiderate and prudent? Then Men
" may be ſaid to be Free, when they act out of Deliberation and
" Judgment, when they properly will what they do, when all
" their

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* Ὅτι πάντες οἱ σοφοὶ ἐλεύθεροι καὶ οἱ μωροὶ δοῦλοι. Diog. Laert. in Zenone.

† *Quid n. Libertas? Poteſtas vivendi ut velis. Quis igitur vivit ut vult, niſi profecto qui recta Sequitur, qui gaudet Officio, cui vivendi via conſiderata atque proviſa eſt?* &c. Cic. Paradox.

their Actions proceed from a full Conſent and a plenary Suffrage of their Minds, and are not extorted from them by Fear or Force. This is true and rational Liberty, and he that lives according to this purſues what is right and honeſt, with an unſpeakable Complacency and Chearfulneſs: This Duty is his Pleaſure. Virtue is his Recreation. He is not hauled on to any Action by Slaviſh Principles, but he embraces what is Juſt and Good becauſe it is ſo, and becauſe 'tis in itſelf pure and lovely, and is moſt ſatisfactory to his Reaſon and Conſcience." He ſtill goes on to tell who is the *Free-man*, || "He is one that ſpeaks, thinks and acts Voluntarily and Freely, all whoſe Counſels and Actions may properly be call'd his Own, they coming from him, and being referr'd to him: Nor is there any thing in the World weighs ſo much with him as his Will and Judgment. This is the Lot of a good and wiſe Man alone that he doth nothing Unwillingly, nothing with Regret, nothing by Compulſion: He muſt needs therefore be *Free*. But then on the contrary, * who can deny, ſaith he, that all light and fooliſh People, all Men of exorbitant Deſires and Wills, all vicious and wicked Perſons are mere *Slaves*? Shall he paſs for a *Free-man* who is enſlaved by a wanton and whoriſh Woman, and is captivated by his luſtful and laſcivious Deſires? And as in great Houſes, there are Servants of a different Guiſe and Quality: Some are better employ'd and finer clad than others, but they are all *Servants*: So is it with Men that are addicted to Vice and Wickedneſs; though ſome indeed are worſe than others, yet there is not one of them but is brought up a *Servant* to his particular Luſt. Thou wilt ſay, perhaps, thou art a Warrior, a great Commander and Governor, then bear a noble Mind, preſide over thy Paſſions, command and maſter thyſelf. Do not be always looking on the Image of thy Anceſtors, on the Pedegree of thy Family, doat not on thy Table and thy *Corinthian* Work, boaſt not of thy Stately Buildings and Manſion-houſe, thy Fiſhponds, thy Barbles and Lampreys. † If I ſee you gazing on theſe things, admiring them, and making a Noiſe about them, I cannot but judge you to be a *Slave* to all ſuch Fooleries and Trifles". And then he ſtrikes at others who are no leſs *Servants* and *Vaſſals* to other Follies, who flatter and fawn upon great Ones, and are at the Beck of every one that is above them, and crouch to all baſe Deſigns. || "If this can be thought to be *Freedom*, what is *Slavery*?" Thus doth the excellent Orator and Philoſopher deſcant on that *Paradox* of the *Stoicks*. And indeed *Tully* may be Tutor to many *Chriſtians*, who are not ſo well acquainted, as they ſhould be, what true *Liberty* is. It were eaſy to ſhew that other improved *Heathens* had this very Notion, and the *Jewiſh* Moraliſts agree with them; witneſs that *Excellent Diſcourſe* of *Philo* upon this Subject, * *That every good Man is Free*.

But we ought chiefly to acquieſce in this, that *Chriſtianity* more ſignally inculcates this grand Truth, as I have abundantly prov'd. *This* effectually repreſents to us, that all Sinners are Bondmen and Slaves. Several of the Chriſtian *Fathers* have expreſs'd this very well, and † St. *Ambroſe* very briefly. Give me Leave to particularize here, and to enlarge. The *covetous* and *worldly-minded* Man is a Slave, a mere Drudge to the World; he is chain'd down to the Earth, and can't lift up his Thoughts and Deſires to any Thing that is heavenly and divine. And do not wonder, that Men of great Revenues and Poſſeſſions are *Slaves*. Do you think thoſe poor Wretches, who are condemn'd to the Mines, are no Slaves, becauſe they work in *Golden Ore*? On no better Grounds can you think the *wealthieſt Sinners* are no Slaves. || Behold a Golden Slave! ſaid *Socrates* of a *rich* Man, who he ſaw was addicted to Vanity and Vice. The Sinner's Wealth doth not take away his Slavery; but is, as he uſes it, his greateſt Servitude and Bondage. The *Epicure* or *Glutton* is a very Vaſſal, he ſerves his Belly, he is tied down to his Diſhes and Dainties. The *Drunkard* is a Slave to his Cups and full Bowls, and is captivated by Intemperance; a Houſe of Drink and Debauchery is his Delightful Priſon, out of which he cannot ſtir. The *ambitious* Man, he that thirſts after Honour, and prides himſelf in his Grandeur, lives in continual Slavery. His

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|| *Qui nihil dicit, nihil facit, nihil cogitat denique niſi libenter ac libere, cujus omnia conſilia, reſque omnes quas gerit, ab ipſo proficiſcuntur, eodemque referuntur, nec eſt ulla res quæ plus apud eum polleat quam ipſius voluntas atque judicium:* &c. Ibid.

* *Quis neget omnes leves, omnes cupidos, omnes denique improbos Servos eſſe? An ille mihi Liber videatur cui mulier imperat?* &c.

† *Intuentem te, admirantem, clamores tollentem cum video, Servum te eſſe ineptiarum omnium judico.*

|| *Quæ Servitus eſt, ſi hæc Libertas exiſtimari poteſt?*

* Περὶ τοῦ πάντα σπουδαῖον εἶναι ἐλεύθερον.

† *Vinculum noſtrum Avaritia eſt, vinculum noſtrum Ebrietas eſt, vinculum noſtrum Concupiſcentia eſt, vinculum noſtrum Superbia eſt. Sunt & Diaboli vincula: ligat nos criminum nexu, ligat nos vinculo fornicationis, vinculo adulterii, vinculo perfidiæ,* &c. In Pſal. cxviii. Serm. 8.

|| *Stobæ. Ser.* xxxii.

His Buſineſs is to wait and attend, to cringe and crouch (for you muſt know a Man may be in Servitude not only to himſelf but to others; he may not only ſerve his own Luſts, but be in Subjection to the vile Inclinations of thoſe that command him.) His Train and Retinue are but ſo many Guards upon him; he is kept in and reſtrain'd, and cannot do what he would, which is the Definition of *Servitude*. The *Whoremonger* and *Adulterer* are the worſt and moſt deplorable Sort of Slaves, for they are chain'd and lock'd up in their own lewd Embraces, and there is little Probability of quitting that Bondage which they are ſo enamour'd with. In a Word, the prophane Swearers and Blaſphemers, the Irreligious and Atheiſtical, the Wrathful, the Envious, the Malicious, the Unmerciful, the Blood-thirſty, are more immediately under the Devil's Bondage, and are his ſworn Servants and Vaſſals.

And thus you ſee, who are *Bondmen* and *Slaves*. I have ſhaked ſome of their Chains, and I hope you will thereby be deterr'd from coming into ſuch Thraldom. I have urged theſe Things upon you, the rather, becauſe the Generality of Perſons are hugely miſtaken here. They do not well know when they are *Slaves*, and they cannot tell when they are at *Liberty*. They reſemble the Church of *Laodicea*, who, tho' ſhe was *miſerable*, and *poor*, and *blind*, and *naked*, yet *ſhe knew not* that ſhe was ſo, but thought ſhe was in a very good Condition. Thus Men are in *Bondage*, but they are not ſenſible of it. They are in Chains and Fetters, and yet think themſelves free. They brag of a Freedom, which is a mere Fiction, a Lye, an Impoſture, a Chimera, a painted Liberty, a Freedom, which is void of all Reality, which hath nothing of Freedom but the bare Name, nay, which is the moſt intolerable Slavery. For, 'tis certain, that he, who is given up to the Commiſſion of Sin, labours under all the Evils and Miſeries that attend the vileſt Bondage; ſuch are Fear and Dread, Inquietude of Mind, Pain and Torture; for, when various Inclinations and Affections domineer, the Perſon is diſtracted and torn, hauled this Way and that. This is properly that which the Apoſtle calls, *ſerving diverſe Luſts and Pleaſures*, Tit. iii. 3. If this be *Liberty*, it is (to ſpeak in the Language, though not the Senſe, of the School-men) a *Liberty of Contradiction*; no Man can reconcile it to any tolerable Meaning and Conſiſtence. If this be true Freedom, then they that are loaden with Chains and Fetters, thoſe that dig in the Mines, or row in the Gallies, are perfectly free. Never *Dane* ſo lorded it in this Land, never cruel *Spaniard* ſo domineer'd over Captive *Indians*, as Satan doth over his Vaſſals. Theſe (alas!) are always turmoiling and drudging, they ſweat and toil, and ſink under their Burdens and Preſſures; they *draw Iniquity with Cords of Vanity, and Sin, as it were with a Cart-rope*, as the Prophet moſt emphatically expreſſeth it; they pull and tug in a laborious Manner, and all is to draw on *Miſchief* upon themſelves; they take great Pains to be damn'd. Can we call thoſe Perſons *Free-men*, nay, can we call thoſe, who think them to be ſo, any other than beſotted Fools? Some of you have heard, I ſuppoſe, of the Practice, which was of old us'd among the *Perſians*, which was this: They choſe out one of their Captives and Slaves, and put the Royal Robes on him, and indulged him all the Splendor and Equipage of a King. His Mock-Majeſty was wont to enjoy all Pleaſures and Honours imaginable, for the Space of three Days, and then they took the poor Wretch, and diveſted him of all his Bravery, and offer'd him in Sacrifice to the Sun. Juſt ſo fares it with the Sinner, that Royal Slave, he is treated with great Magnificence, he hath what his Heart can wiſh (others think ſo at leaſt, becauſe they do not ſee the tormenting Reflections which are within) he abounds in the Pleaſures and Blandiſhments of this World, he lives as he liſts, he is ſet free. I, but ſhall this be eſteemed *Freedom* by underſtanding Perſons; Will not his Delights have a ſudden Period? Muſt he not ſhortly be a Sacrifice to the Divine Juſtice? Is he not like a Malefactor, who is let out of Priſon, only to be carried to Execution? He hath left the Dungeon, but is haſtening to the Gibbet. You will not term this *Liberty*, will you? Such is the Freedom of a Sinner: He ſeems to be under no Reſtraint, but to be free; but he carries his Priſon with him wherever he goes, and he is ſuddenly to be confined in Chains of Darkneſs for ever. This is his miſerable Caſe, and yet ſuch is his beſotted Temper that he delights in his Thraldom, he is pleas'd with his Bondage, and he takes no Care to be deliver'd from it.

3. You, that by God's Grace are made free, maintain your Freedom, *ſtand faſt in this Liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made you free, and be not entangled again with the Yoke of Bondage*; relapſe not into your former Vaſſalage and Slavery. Do we not ſee how induſtrious and zealous Men are in aſſerting their Liberties and Immunities? They are unwilling not only to part with theſe, but to have them ſo much as diminiſhed. How will a Great City tug for its Charter? How will the oil'd Tongues ply themſelves to defend it? Why ſhould not Chriſtians then, as they are *Chriſtians* and are *ſee free* by the Bleſſed Redeemer, be ſollicitous and eager in preſerving that Freedom which is purchaſed for them? They have their Charter; let them maintain it. What greater Honour and Dignity could have been conferr'd on them, than, that the *Son ſhould make them free, and free indeed?* Let them then aſſert this Privilege to the Utmoſt; let them take heed that they forfeit not their Liberty, and throw themſelves into Bondage, eſpecially thoſe of Sin, by voluntary conſenting to it, and cloſing with it.

4. I Exhort you all, who are not yet in Poſſeſſion of this matchleſs Privilege, to endeavour by all Means to attain to it. Let this take up all your Cares, and engroſs all your Studies, how you may be ſet free from the curſed Bondage of Sin and Satan, and how you may be admitted into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God. Let the ſerious Conſideration of the Baſeneſs of the Former, and of the Excellency of the Latter, effectually prevail with you. When the *Roman* Generals where about to fight with their Enemies, it was their uſual Method to briſk and hearten their Soldiers, by telling them, that if they did not quit themſelves like Men of Courage, but ſuffer'd themſelves by their Cowardiſe to fall into the Enemies Hands, *they ſhould become Slaves*; and 'tis impoſſible to tell you what powerful Rhetorick there was *in thoſe Words.* Upon this they took Heart, and fought with incredible Mettle and Vigour; they unanimouſly reſolv'd rather to loſe their *Lives* than their *Liberty*; they choſe Death rather than Slavery. Let that which I have ſaid on this Subject have the like Effect upon *you*; vigorouſly oppoſe all thoſe who would rob you of your ſpiritual Freedom, and let nothing affright you ſo much as the Thoughts of ſpiritual Slavery. * Servitude, ſaith *Tully*, is the Obedience of a broken and abject Mind, and which hath no Government of itſelf; and that of Sin is exactly of the ſame Nature. || A Slave hath no Right, ſay the Civilians; he is another Man's, and therefore hath Right to nothing, no not to himſelf. A Slave is but Part of his Maſter's Houſehold-Stuff; he goes for a dull, heavy, and inanimate Thing, or at moſt he is but † a living Tool, as the *Civil Law* alſo calls him, he is us'd by the Hand of the Maſter and Owner as he thinks fit. Slaves are called by the *Greek* and *Roman* Lawyers * *Bodies*, becauſe they are to their Maſters as the Body is to the Soul; the Maſter exerciſeth the ſame deſpotick Power over them, that the Soul doth over the Body. A Servant doth nothing of himſelf, and is † accounted but a Cypher. A Slave can make no Will, becauſe he is wholly at the Will of another. He is not his own Man, and therefore is not permitted to diſpoſe of any thing. And he cannot diſpoſe of any Thing, becauſe he poſſeſſeth nothing, but is himſelf the Poſſeſſion of another. What Character can be given that repreſents an *old accuſtomed Sinner* better than this doth? Yea Slaves || are *dead Men*, ſaith the Civil Law, and this is agreeable to the Style of the Holy Writ, which ſets forth Sinners as *dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins*, and calleth Holineſs (which is Chriſtian Freedom) *Newneſs of Life.*

But let me turn your Thoughts from the Vileneſs of this ſpiritual Slavery to the Benefits of true Liberty. * He is a *Free-man*, ſaith *Arrianus*, to whom every Thing happens according to his Choice, who doth all that he hath a Mind to do and whom no Body can hinder from doing ſo. Or more briefly, the ſame excellent Author thus * He is free who liveth as he will. Now *Chriſtianity*, on this Account, is the greateſt and the only Freedom; for it makes the Mind of every good Man ſubmit wholly to God's Will, and to be entirely at his Diſpoſal, and to deſire nothing but what he thinks good for him, and always to acquieſce in his Will and Pleaſure, and ſo to make God's Will his. A true Chriſtian doth nothing againſt his Mind, he hath and enjoys what he would have; that is, what God would have him to have, and thus he is perfectly *free*, becauſe he is forced to nothing. The Moraliſts could ſay, * Virtue is maſterleſs, and uncontroll'd, and conſequently *free.* But *Chriſtianity* hath made this Freedom far greater than ever it was; the excellent Laws of Chriſt have enlarged this Liberty. How pleaſant then muſt the Life of a Chriſtian needs be? What Contentment poſſeſſeth his Soul? How delightful is it to him to do all Things freely, and to have no Force upon any of his Actions? How happy is his Condition, to whom nothing is able to offer Violence? Let the World go as croſs as can be, his Thoughts are even and ſedate, ſeren eand undiſturbed, and no Accident whatſoever can put him by this Temper. He ſaith with him in *Sophocles*, * Though my Body be in a *ſervile* Condition, yet my Mind is *free* and unconfined. He can ſay as that *Lacedemonian*, when he ſtood in the Market to be ſold, and one ask'd him what he was, *Be it known to you*, ſaith he, † *I am* a Free-man, *as ſorry a Creature as I ſeem to you to be.* So may every true Believer ſay

* *Servitus eſt obedientia fracti animi & abjecti, & arbitrio carentis ſuo.*

|| *Servile caput nullum jus habet. Servus dicitur nullius juris.*

† *Animatum domini inſtrumentum.*

* *σώματα, Corpora.*

† *Servus pro nullo habetur.* Ulpian.

|| *Servitus morti aſſimulatur.*

* Ἐλεύθερος ἐστιν ᾧ γίνεται πάντα κατα προαίρεσιν, ϗ ὃν οὐδεὶς δύναται κωλύσαι. Lib. 1. Cap. 12.

* Ἐλευθερός ἐστιν ὁ ζῶν ὡς βούλεται.

* Ἀδέσποτον ἡ ἀρετή.

* Εἰ σῶμα δοῦλον, ἀλλ' ὁ νοῦς ἐλεύθερος.

† Ἐλεύθερος εἰμί. Plut.

(be his Circumſtances otherwiſe never ſo mean and contemptible) I am *free indeed*, and Chriſt hath made me ſo; nor can any outward Croſſes whatſoever deprive me of this bleſſed Freedom.

I beſeech you then, aſpire after this *excellent Privilege* of the Goſpel, be not at Reſt till you have attain'd it; and, that you may effectually do ſo, I leave with you theſe three plain *Directions*.

1. Be ſenſible of your Bondage. Many Perſons, as you have heard, are miſtaken in the true Notion of Liberty. What great Numbers in the World are Drudges and Slaves to the Devil, and yet count themſelves free? They know not, that they are in the *Houſe of Bondage*, ſo groſs an *Egyptian Darkneſs* overwhelms them. They lay themſelves down and tamely ſubmit to have their Ears bor'd through, to be perpetual Servants; and yet they are not ſenſible of it. This, therefore, I offer unto you in the firſt Place, that you would, by all means, inform yourſelves of your Condition, that you would be apprehenſive of your State. To know yourſelf to be diſeaſed is the firſt Step to Recovery; to ſee your Slavery is the ready Way to Enlargement. Examine yourſelf then, whether Sin be a Burden to you. Pain and Sickneſs, Scarcity, and Want, and ſuch like Croſſes, are a heavy Load upon you, and you are heard to complain of them. But are you weary of the Burden of your Sins? Do you ſigh and groan under this Weight? Do you complain of this Load? Do any of you cry out with the Apoſtle, *O wretched Man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the Body of this Death?* Rom. vii. 24. His *Body of Death*, *i. e.* his ſinful Fleſh incloſed and *impriſoned* him; but that he was *ſenſible* of it, was Matter of Rejoicing to him, for immediately after this Complaint, he *thanks God through Jeſus Chriſt*. It was a Mercy, that he could cry out thus, and lament his wretched Condition, It was a ſingular Mercy, that though he was ſhut up and immured in his *Body of Sin and Death*, yet he had ſome *Life*, and (which was an Indication of that) *Senſe* remaining. See then, that you endeavour after this, bring yourſelves to a *Feeling* of your Miſery, *know* that you are in *Priſon*, and then with the Apoſtle here you will deſire to be *delivered*.

2. The Perſon impriſon'd and condemn'd, if he would take an effectual Courſe to gain his Freedom, muſt not only know and be ſenſible of his deplorable Condition, but he muſt *ſue out his Pardon*. This, therefore, is my next Direction; with earneſt Prayer, with fervent Deſires and Wiſhes, beſiege the Throne of Grace, and wreſtle with the Almighty by continual and importunate Petitions. Never think to obtain ſo great a Privilege as this is, without the wonderful Aſſiſtance of the *Spirit of Grace*; and never think *this* can be acquired, but by the *Spirit of Supplication*. *David* by the wilful Commiſſion of Sin brought himſelf into Bondage, and loſt the *free Spirit*; but you read what Way and Method he took to recover it, he moſt humbly *ſupplicated* the Divine Goodneſs, and *pray'd* to be * *upheld* with it again. Go you, and do the like; be earneſt in your Addreſſes to Heaven, that you may be deliver'd from your Bondage; *Beg* at the Grates, and you ſhall certainly be releaſed and ſet free. To excite your *Faith*, and thereby to make your *Prayers* more effectual, fix your Eyes on thoſe *Promiſes* which are made of ſpiritual Freedom. *Iſaiah*, that evangelical Prophet, ſetting forth the gracious Purpoſe of God the Father, in ſending his Son, tells us, that he will *give him* to this very End; that *he may bring out the Priſoners from the Priſon, and them that ſit in Darkneſs out of the Priſon Houſe*, Iſaiah xlii. 6,7. And again, Chap. xlix. 8,9. *Thus, ſaith the Lord, I will give thee for a Covenant of the People, that thou may'ſt ſay to the Priſoners, Go forth.* And more fully yet, in *Iſaiah* lxi. 1. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe the Lord hath appointed me to preach good Tidings, to proclaim Liberty to the Captives, and the Opening of the Priſon to them that are bound.* Which Words our Saviour (who is the Perſon here ſpoken of) applied to himſelf, as you may ſee in *Luke* iv. 18, His Office is to redeem poor Captive Sinners, to ſet open the Priſon-doors to thoſe who are weary of their Bondage, and are deſirous to be ſet at Liberty. Therefore, when you preſent your Supplications before God, produce theſe precious *Promiſes*, heartily believe them, and lay claim to them, and your Prayers ſhall be heard,

Thirdly and Laſtly, The *Malefactor*, who expects *Pardon* and *Freedom*, muſt give ſome Teſtimony and Aſſurance, that he intends for the future to *reform his Life*, and to be a new *Man*. Would you then partake of the *Goſpel Liberty*, which Chriſt hath purchas'd; would you be releas'd and ſet free; then know this, that it is required on your Part that you firmly reſolve to amend your Lives, to pleaſe God in every Action, to live to his Glory and Honour, to ſtrive againſt Sin continually, and to combate daily with your ſpiritual Enemies: For you muſt remember this, that though your Freedom be *purchas'd* by Chriſt the Redeemer, yet you are to do your Part; you muſt make your Way to Liberty through whole Troops of Oppoſition. *Put on* then the *whole Armour of God*, and manfully *reſiſt* the evil Spirit, and *he will fly from you*. But then forget not to go forth in the Name of the Almighty, *be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might*; encourage yourſelves in him, and know aſſuredly that you ſhall be able to do all things through Chriſt who ſtrengtheneth you.

To conclude, ſeeing the *Chriſtian Freedom* and *Serving of God* are ſo nearly allied, be willing and forward to ſerve ſo Good a Maſter, whoſe * Service is far to be preferr'd not only before all Earthly Liberty, but before the Greateſt Dominion and Sovereignty of Princes. Reſolve then to ſubmit to his Laws, to do his Will, and to obey his Commands; and after a few Days ſpent here in the Service of your Gracious Lord, you ſhall be called up to his Kingdom in Heaven, where you ſhall receive the Wages, the Reward, the Crown which was laid up for all thoſe who faithfully ſerve him here on Earth.

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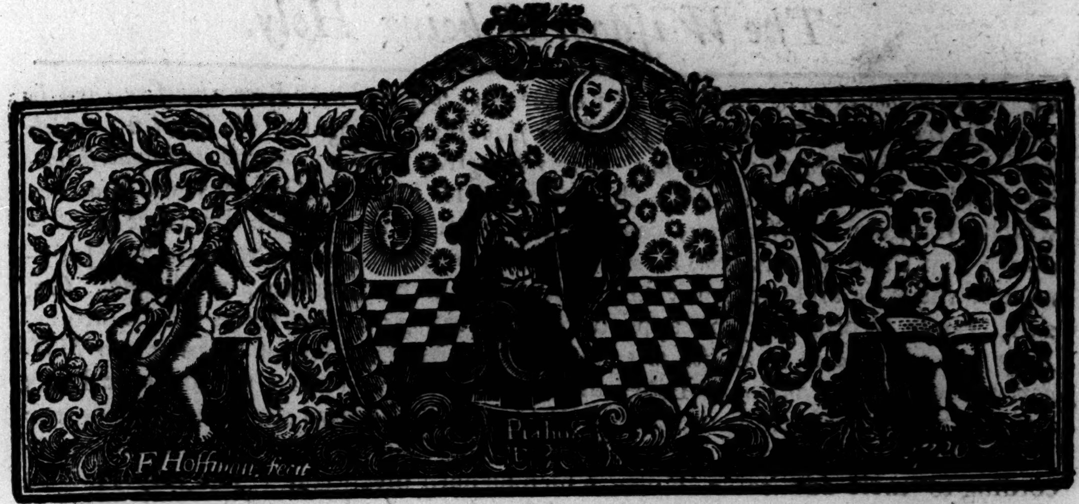
* Pſal. Li. 12.

* *Ὧ τὸ δουλεύειν οὐκ ἐλευθερίας μόνον ἀλλὰ ϗ βασιλείας ἄμεινον.* Philo de Monarch.



THE WISDOM OF BEING HOLY.

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DEUT. iv. 6.

Keep therefore, and do them, for this is your Wiſdom, and your Underſtanding.

MOSES, the Man of God, having, by the Appointment of Heaven, delivered to the *Iſraelites* moſt excellent Laws and Commandments; pathetically exhorts them in this Chapter, *to keep thoſe Laws and obſerve thoſe Commandments.* This People were the peculiar Favourites of Heaven, the Darlings of the Almighty, and accordingly had ſuch ſingular Mercies and Bleſſings conferred on them as were denied to the reſt of the World. But in nothing were they more highly favoured and ſingly honoured than in having Laws and Precepts, Statutes and Judgments of a peculiar Nature vouchſafed unto them. *He had not dealt ſo with any Nation, and as for his Judgments they have not known them,* Pſalm clxvii. 20. Wherefore this excellent Law-giver and Prophet reminds them of their proper Duty, and affectionately ſtirs them up to live and act according to thoſe matchleſs Laws and Rules which God had given them; and which he (by God's Command) had inſtructed them in. *Behold* (ſaith he) *I have taught you Statutes and Judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded* (be his Circumſtances otherwiſe never ſo mean and contemptible) I am *free indeed*, and Chriſt hath made me ſo; nor can any outward Croſſes whatſoever deprive me of this bleſſed Freedom.

I beſeech you then, aſpire after this *excellent Privilege* of the Goſpel, be not at Reſt till you have attain'd it; and, that you may effectually do ſo, I leave with you theſe three plain *Directions*.

1. Be ſenſible of your Bondage. Many Perſons, as you have heard, are miſtaken in the true Notion of Liberty. What great Numbers in the World are Drudges and Slaves to the Devil, and yet count themſelves free? They know not, that they are in the *Houſe of Bondage*, ſo groſs an *Egyptian Darkneſs* overwhelms them. They lay themſelves down and tamely ſubmit to have their Ears bor'd through, to be perpetual Servants; and yet they are not ſenſible of it. This, therefore, I offer unto you in the firſt Place, that you would, by all means, inform yourſelves of your Condition, that you would be apprehenſive of your State. To know yourſelf to be diſeaſed is the firſt Step to Recovery; to ſee your Slavery is the ready Way to Enlargement. Examine yourſelf then, whether Sin be a Burden to you. Pain and Sickneſs, Scarcity, and Want, and ſuch like Croſſes, are a heavy Load upon you, and you are heard to complain of them. But are you weary of the Burden of your Sins? Do you ſigh and groan under this Weight? Do you complain of this Load? Do any of you cry out with the Apoſtle, *O wretched Man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the Body of this Death?* Rom. vii. 24. His *Body of Death*, *i. e.* his ſinful Fleſh incloſed and *impriſoned* him; but that he was *ſenſible* of it, was Matter of Rejoicing to him, for immediately after this Complaint, he *thanks God through Jeſus Chriſt*. It was a Mercy, that he could cry out thus, and lament his wretched Condition, It was a ſingular Mercy, that though he was ſhut up and immured in his *Body* of *Sin and Death*, yet he had ſome *Life*, and (which was an Indication of that) *Senſe* remaining. See then, that you endeavour after this, bring yourſelves to a *Feeling* of your Miſery, *know* that you are in *Priſon*, and then with the Apoſtle here you will deſire to be *delivered*.

2. The Perſon impriſon'd and condemn'd, if he would take an effectual Courſe to gain his Freedom, muſt not only know and be ſenſible of his deplorable Condition, but he muſt *ſue out his Pardon*. This, therefore, is my next Direction; with earneſt Prayer, with fervent Deſires and Wiſhes, beſiege the Throne of Grace, and wreſtle with the Almighty by continual and importunate Petitions. Never think to obtain ſo great a Privilege as this is, without the wonderful Aſſiſtance of the *Spirit of Grace*; and never think *this* can be acquired, but by the *Spirit of Supplication*. *David* by the wilful Commiſſion of Sin brought himſelf into Bondage, and loſt the *free Spirit*; but you read what Way and Method he took to recover it, he moſt humbly *ſupplicated* the Divine Goodneſs, and *pray'd* to be * *upheld* with it again. Go you, and do the like; be earneſt in your Addreſſes to Heaven, that you may be deliver'd from your Bondage; *Beg* at the Grates, and you ſhall certainly be releaſed and ſet free. To excite your *Faith*, and thereby to make your *Prayers* more effectual, fix your Eyes on thoſe *Promiſes* which are made of ſpiritual Freedom. *Iſaiah*, that evangelical Prophet, ſetting forth the gracious Purpoſe of God the Father, in ſending his Son, tells us, that he will *give him* to this very End; that *he may bring out the Priſoners from the Priſon, and them that ſit in Darkneſs out of the Priſon Houſe*, Iſaiah xlii. 6,7. And again, Chap. xlix. 8,9. *Thus, ſaith the Lord, I will give thee for a Covenant of the People, that thou may'ſt ſay to the Priſoners, Go forth.* And more fully yet, in *Iſaiah* lxi. 1. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe the Lord hath appointed me to preach good Tidings, to proclaim Liberty to the Captives, and the Opening of the Priſon to them that are bound.* Which Words our Saviour (who is the Perſon here ſpoken of) applied to himſelf, as you may ſee in *Luke* iv. 18, His Office is to redeem poor Captive Sinners, to ſet open the Priſon-doors to thoſe who are weary of their Bondage, and are deſirous to be ſet at Liberty. Therefore, when you preſent your Supplications before God, produce theſe precious *Promiſes*, heartily believe them, and lay claim to them, and your Prayers ſhall be heard,

*Pſal. Li. 12.

Thirdly and Laſtly, The *Malefactor*, who expects *Pardon* and *Freedom*, muſt give ſome Teſtimony and Aſſurance, that he intends for the future to *reform his Life*, and to be a new *Man*. Would you then partake of the *Goſpel Liberty*, which Chriſt hath purchas'd; would you be releas'd and ſet free; then know this, that it is required on your Part that you firmly reſolve to amend your Lives, to pleaſe God in every Action, to live to his Glory and Honour, to ſtrive againſt Sin continually, and to combate daily with your ſpiritual Enemies: For you muſt remember this, that though your Freedom be *purchas'd* by Chriſt the Redeemer, yet you are to do your Part; you muſt make your Way to Liberty through whole Troops of Oppoſition. *Put on* then the *whole Armour of God*, and manſully *reſiſt* the evil Spirit, and *he will fly from you*. But then forget not to go forth in the Name of the Almighty, *be ſtrong in the Lord; and in the Power of his Might*; encourage yourſelves in him, and know aſſuredly that you ſhall be able to do all things through Chriſt who ſtrengtheneth you.

To conclude, ſeeing the *Chriſtian Freedom* and *Serving of God* are ſo nearly allied, be willing and forward to ſerve ſo Good a Maſter, whoſe * Service is far to be preferr'd not only before all Earthly Liberty, but before the Greateſt Dominion and Sovereignty of Princes. Reſolve then to ſubmit to his Laws, to do his Will, and to obey his Commands; and after a few Days ſpent here in the Service of your Gracious Lord, you ſhall be called up to his Kingdom in Heaven, where you ſhall receive the Wages, the Reward, the Crown which was laid up for all thoſe who faithfully ſerve him here on Earth.

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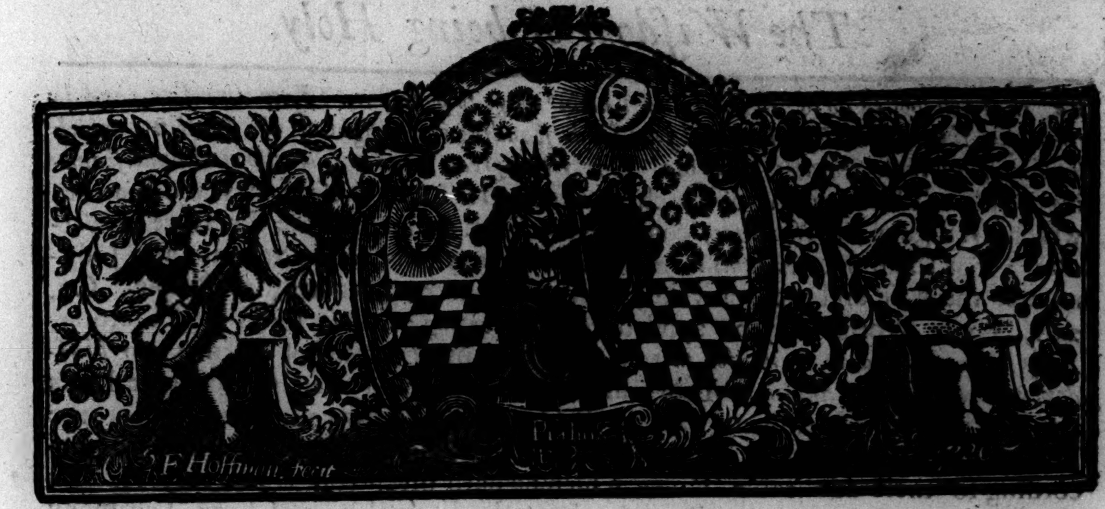
* Ὦ τὸ δουλεύειν οὐκ ἐλευθερίας μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ βασιλείας ἄμεινον. Philo de Monarch.



THE WISDOM OF BEING HOLY.

Deut. iv. 6.

Keep therefore, and do them, for this is your Wiſdom, and your Underſtanding.

MOSES, the Man of God, having, by the Appointment of Heaven, delivered to the *Iſraelites* moſt excellent Laws and Commandments; pathetically exhorts them in this Chapter, *to keep thoſe Laws and obſerve thoſe Commandments.* This People were the peculiar Favourites of Heaven, the Darlings of the Almighty, and accordingly had ſuch ſingular Mercies and Bleſſings conferred on them as were denied to the reſt of the World. But in nothing were they more highly favoured and ſingly honoured than in having Laws and Precepts, Statutes and Judgments of a peculiar Nature vouchſafed unto them. *He had not dealt ſo with any Nation, and as for his Judgments they have not known them,* Pſalm clxvii. 20. Wherefore this excellent Law-giver and Prophet reminds them of their proper Duty, and affectionately ſtirs them up to live and act according to thoſe matchleſs Laws and Rules which God had given them; and which he (by God's Command) had inſtructed them in. *Behold* (ſaith he) *I have taught you Statutes and Judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded* *me, that you ſhould do ſo, in the Land whither ye go to poſſeſs it. Keep therefore, and do them, for this is your Wiſdom and your Underſtanding in the ſight of the Nations, which ſhall hear all theſe Statutes, and ſay, Surely this great Nation is a wiſe and underſtanding People.* The Meaning of which Words is, 1. That theſe Laws and Statutes which God gave the *Iſraelites*, contained in them an ineſtimable Treaſure of Wiſdom: For thoſe Words [*this is your Wiſdom*] may refer to the Statutes and Judgments, the wiſe and well-order'd Laws, which were given to that People. Or, 2*dly*, Thoſe Words may be applied to the *keeping* of thoſe Laws and Statutes, *Keep therefore and do them, for this*, i.e. this keeping and doing of them *is your Wiſdom and your Underſtanding*. Your diligent obſerving and practiſing of theſe Laws and Statutes are an eminent Part of Wiſdom. You ſhew your ſelves Men of true Underſtanding and Prudence, by obeying God's Commandments, and living according to thoſe admirable Rules which he hath given you. The very Nations which are round about you will applaud you in doing this, and bear Teſtimony that you are a wiſe and underſtanding People. So that my Text ſeems to be a Parallel with that of *Job, The Fear of the Lord, that is Wiſdom, and to depart from Evil, is Underſtanding*. And it is of the ſame Import with that of the Royal Preacher, *The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Knowledge*, or *Wiſdom*. Prov. ix. 10.

For though indeed theſe Words are generally underſtood of the *Servile Fear* which is preparatory to Religion, and may be ſaid to be the firſt Elements and Rudiments of Piety, the *Beginning* of true Wiſdom, yet I conceive this is too narrow a Meaning of the Place, and that the *Fear of the Lord*, is to be taken here in a larger Senſe, and comprehends the whole Service of God, or all Religion. For if *Wiſdom it ſelf, and the Fear of the Lord* be reciprocal, as in that Place of *Job* juſt now mention'd, then it is clear that by the *Beginning of Wiſdom* ſomething more is imported to us than the firſt Rudiments and Eſſays of it. By the *Beginning* therefore is meant the *Chief* and *Principal Part*, as the Margent of our Bibles renders it: For the *Hebrew* Word *Reſhith* (which is here uſed) is from *Roſh Caput*, the Principal Part of the Body. *Solomon* tells us That *Wiſdom is the Principal Thing*, Prov. iv. 7. And it is as true That *the Fear of the Lord* (i. e. fearing him ſo as to keep his Commandments) is *Reſhith*, the *Principal Part of Wiſdom*. And ſo the *Greek* Word * ἀρχὴ, ſignifies not only a *Beginning*, but a *Chief* or *Principal Thing* or *Perſon*, and therefore it might be otherwiſe tranſlated than it is here.

Or thus, (becauſe we will not baulk our *Engliſh* Tranſlation) *The Beginning of Wiſdom*, or the *Chief Part of Wiſdom* are both one, the *Beginning* of a Thing having been ever eſteemed the *Main Part of it*.

Dimidium facti, qui bene cœpit, habet.

He that hath well begun, hath as good as half done, becauſe uſually Men are as long in addreſſing themſelves to a great Buſineſs as they are in diſpatching it, when they have once taken it in hand. So that the *Beginning* or *Entrance* into a weighty Matter, may deſervedly be ſaid to be the *Chief Part* of the Work. Accordingly the Meaning of the wiſe Man is, That the Fear of God, or the true ſerving of him is a neceſſary and principal Ingredient of true Wiſdom; nay, this practical Fear of God, and true Wiſdom are convertible. The beſt and chiefeſt Wiſdom is to be religious, and to live in the Fear of God.

And this is the Senſe of the Great Law-Giver in my Text, *Keep and do the Statutes and Judgments which I have taught you*, ſaith he, *for this is your Wiſdom and Underſtanding*. As much as to ſay, He that lives a holy and godly Life, he that walks innocently and uprightly, and conſcientiouſly obſerves the Divine Laws, doth truly deſerve the Name of a *Wiſe-man*: But he that liveth wickedly and prophanely, and takes no Care to regulate his Actions by the Commandments of God, doth give as evident Proof of the contrary, *viz.* that he is a *Fool*, or one *void of Underſtanding*. It is the firſt of theſe which I will treat of from theſe Words, namely, *The Wiſdom of keeping God's Commandments*, and being truly Religious and Vertuous. I will ſhew you that a Vertuous and Righteous Man is Maſter of the greateſt Underſtanding and higheſt Prudence, and that to be Good and Wiſe are one and the ſame Thing.

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* Ἀρχὴ principium, imperium, Ἄρχομαι incipio, perficio.

I premiſe this then, that there are two Eſſential Parts of *true Wiſdom.* The firſt is to *underſtand* and *judge aright* of Things, to think of them as indeed they are; the ſecond is to *act according to this Apprehenſion and Judgment of Things*, to ſhun the Evil which we diſcover to be ſuch, and to chooſe and embrace what we know to be right and good. This I offer as an exact Idea of *true Wiſdom*; and accordingly you ſhall ſee that the Perſon who leads a virtuous and holy Life is the only wiſe Man.

Firſt then, he hath the trueſt Notions and Conceptions of Things, he hath arrived unto a right diſcerning of what is juſt and good. His Underſtanding (which is the Baſis of all Religion) is duly informed, and his Principles are the beſt and the trueſt. Error and a depraved Judgment being the Source of the greateſt Immoralities in the World, a *wiſe Man* firſt of all endeavours to lay aſide all vitiated Opinions, to abandon the vulgar (which commonly proves to be the falſe) Senſe and Conception of Things. He remembers thoſe Words of the great Maſter of Stoiciſm *, Men are not ſo much diſturb'd with *Things themſelves*, as with the *Opinions* they have of them. They think thoſe Things are Good which are not, and thoſe Evil that are nothing ſo: And hence iſſue all their Diſtractions and unhandſome Behaviour. His Care is therefore to remove all wrong Opinions and Miſtakes about Things. He labours to think aright, and to bring himſelf as ſoon as may be to true Apprehenſions. Now then, *holy* and *righteous Men* may be believ'd to have attain'd to this firſt Part of true Wiſdom, becauſe they have right Notions of *themſelves*, their *Souls* and *Bodies*, of the *Things of this World*, and of *God* the Supreme Governor of all.

1. This is a right Apprehenſion of a wiſe Man, that the *Soul* or *Mind* of Man is better than the Body. This was the Acknowledgment of all the wiſe Men, even among the *Gentiles* *. In the Courſe of this Life, ſaith one of them, the Soul of Man is the chief, the Body the next to that, and after the Body, the things of this Life. This is evident from the peculiar Make and excellent Operations of human Souls, which far ſurpaſs thoſe that are to be found in the Corporeal part. They are Immaterial and Spiritual Subſtances, and therefore are really diſtinct from Matter, and conſequently can diſcharge thoſe Offices which are not common to Bodies, which are only a Heap of Fleſh, Bones, Nerves, Membranes, and ſuch like. Hence † *Plato* and other *† great Philoſophers aſſerted this to be a true Maxim, that *the Soul is the Man*, and that ‡* *there is nothing admirable and excellent in us but Minds.* Wherefore, tho ſenſual and worldly Men prefer their Bodies before their Souls, yet thoſe who have attained to right Apprehenſions and Conceptions of Things, and know how to eſteem them according to their real and intrinſick Worth, ſet the higheſt Rate on that which is their principal Part, and which in its Nature, approaches neareſt to God, who is a Spirit. Right Reaſon and the Order of Nature dictate this, for it is highly rational that the Things which are moſt worthy and of the higheſt Rank, ſhould be regarded before thoſe that are of an inferior Quality. If then to do Things †† agreeable to Nature and Reaſon be *Wiſdom*, this is ſo.

Again, as to the *Soul*, This is a right Apprehenſion which a *wiſe* Man hath concerning it, that the ſuperior Faculties of it are to guide and govern the inferior ones. As the Soul of Man hath Power to think, to underſtand, to judge, to diſcourſe, ſo from its near Conjunction with the Body, it hath Motions and Paſſions which are little or not at all different from thoſe that are in Brutes. This brutiſh Part therefore muſt be in Subjection to the other, it being fit and juſt that it ſhould be ruled and govern'd by that which is higher and nobler. This is the ** *Leading* part of the Soul, this that which hath the *Empire* and *Sovereignty* given it over the other. Now, how irrational and imprudent is it to let the ſuperior Part be ſubject to the inferior, the Rational and Divine to that which is Brutiſh and Carnal; to let Senſe overcome Reaſon; to let the Beaſt ride the Man? It was excellently ſaid by the great Philoſopher, *‡* We ought to do all we can to live according to the Direction and Conduct of that Part in us, which is beſt and nobleſt, which is moſt excellent and ſupreme. The extravagant Affections muſt be quell'd and allay'd; the inordinate Emotions of Anger, Hatred, Grief and the like, muſt be ſuppreſs'd, they hindring us from the Uſe of free and impartial Reaſon, beſides that they are the Plague and Torment of the Mind.

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* Ταράσσει τοὺς ἀνθρώπους οὐ τὰ πράγματα, ἀλλὰ περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων δόγματα.

* Ἐν δὲ τῷ τοῦ βίου δρόμῳ τιμιώτατον μὲν ἡ ψυχὴ, μετὰ δὲ ταύτην τὸ σῶμα, καὶ τρίτον ἡ τύχη. Max. Tyr.

† In *Alcibiade.*

*† Neq; tu is es quem forma iſta declarat, ſed mens cujuſq; is eſt quiſque. *Cic. Somn. Scip.*

‡* Cogita in te præter Animam nihil eſſe mirabile. *Sen. Ep.* 8.

†† Nunquam aliud Natura, aliud Sapientia dicit. *Juv.*

** Τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν. Max. Tyr. Dux atq; Imperator Animus. *Saluſt.* Rector animus. *Tertull.* Gubernatrix hominis anima. *Ambroſ.*

‡ Ἅπαντα δεῖ ποιεῖν πρὸς τὸ ζῆν κατὰ τὸ κράτιστον ἐν ἡμῖν. Ariſtot. Eth.

2. A wiſe Man hath This right Apprehenſion concerning his Body, that tho' it be inferior to his Soul, yet having a near relation to it, it is to be taken care of, and us'd aright for his Soul's ſake; it is to be made obedient and obſequious to his better Part, and to be †*† wholly under its Rule and Tuition. Certainly it is no ſmall part of Virtue and Wiſdom to look carefully after that which is ſo uſeful an Organ, and hath ſo great ſubſerviency to the Soul. On this Account we are concern'd to keep under our Bodies, that they may not become Inſtruments of Sin, and † *Weapons of Unrighteouſneſs*, but that they may obey the Government of our Minds. 'Twas excellently ſaid by the great Moraliſt, that * 'tis a Sign of a dull and coarſe Wit to ſpend much Time about the Body, and the Things belonging to it, as eating and drinking, and the like. ** Theſe Things are to be done by the bye, but the great Care and Study is to be about the Mind, and the improving of that. Moderation then and Temperance, Sobriety and Chaſtity are no leſs healthful and beneficial to the Soul than they are known and confeſs'd to be to the Body. And as for Reſt and Exerciſe, due Repoſe and innocent Refreſhments, with their regular Returns and Periods, they are not unworthy the Conſideration of a *wiſe Man*, becauſe he knows that theſe have a Relation to his Duty, and that his Corporal Part is to be intereſted in many Actions of his Religion. This I aſſert, though it is true, the Welfare of the Immaterial and Spiritual Part is infinitely more precious than that of our Corporal one, and therefore is to be the chief Employ of our Lives. But this I am to ſay, that the latter of theſe muſt by no means be neglected. The *Epicureans* of old ſlighted and vilified the *Soul*; the *Stoicks* were careleſs of their *Bodies*, but it was very fooliſhly done of both. Whereas, to take Care of *both*, and yet to prefer one before the other, is the part of a wiſe Man and a Chriſtian. Thus a pious Father of the Church hath briefly determined, † Our *firſt* and chiefeſt Care (ſaith he) muſt be for our Souls; and in the *ſecond* Place we are to look after our Bodies. The greateſt Worth of theſe is that they are the Receptacles of our *Souls*, Souls that are Sacred and Heaven-born, made for Felicity, and calculated for eternal Glory; on which Account they clearly are our beſt and choiceſt Moyety. Wherefore they are to be preferr'd to that other Part, and (as an excellent Writer ſaith of †† *Moſes*,) we ought (like him) to chuſe rather the Life of the Soul than of the Body.

3. A wiſe Man hath true Notions of *the things of this World*, as Wealth, Pleaſure, Preferment, Grandeur, and all other outward and bodily Concerns. He knows that they are, like the Body, of a decaying and periſhing Nature. Some of theſe Things are merely imaginary, others are real but troubleſome, and all of them are ſhort and tranſitory, for they lie at the Mercy of a thouſand Accidents, which by all our Skill and Induſtry we are not able to avoid. They prove too often the Incentives of Pride, of Sloth, of Senſuality and Security; of Animoſities and Contentions, of Cruelty and Blood-ſhed. Beſides, they are enjoy'd by the worſt and vileſt Race of Men, which is no ſmall Diſparagement to them. Yea, it muſt be confeſs'd that the moſt admired and celebrated Pleaſures of the World are as much, if not more in the Poſſeſſion of Brute Beaſts than rational Creatures. From ſuch ſhort Hints as theſe it is eaſy to gather, that theſe Things are not the chief Good of Man, and conſequently Things of ſome other nature are, and that Virtue and Holineſs, ſerving of God and enjoying him are the great and important Things we are to look after, and moſt paſſionately to employ ourſelves about. This is *Wiſdom*, for * every wiſe and underſtanding Man knows how to *value* Things aright, and he always ſets the *higheſt Value* on thoſe Things which are *beſt*, *i. e.* which moſt deſerve to be eſteemed. This makes him with

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†*† Ἀρχέτω ψυχὴ, στρατευέτω τὸ σῶμα. Max. Tyr. Diſſ. 24.

† Rom. 6. 13.

* Ἀφυΐας σημεῖον τὸ ἐνδιατρίβειν τοῖς περὶ τὸ σῶμα. Epict.

** Ταῦτα μὲν ἐν παρέργῳ ποιητέον· περὶ δὲ γνώμην ἡ πᾶσα ἔστω ἐπιστροφή. Idem.

† Χρὴ τὰ μὲν πρωτεῖα τῇ ψυχῇ, τὰ δὲ δευτερεῖα τῷ σώματι νέμειν. Iſidor. Peluſ. Ep. l. 5.

†† Ψυχῇ ἐπεπόθει μόνῃ ζῆν οὐ σώματι. Philo.

* Soli ſapienti notum eſt quanti res quæq; taxanda ſit. *Sen. Ep.* 82.

good Reaſon prefer the Things relating to the Soul (as being the moſt * honourable and worthy) before thoſe that belong to the Body, to prefer Heaven before Earth, and the inviſible World above, before the dark Globe below, which is but a ſhrivell'd Atom in reſpect of that.

Moreover, he hath This right Conception, that the Things of this World, the Pleaſures, Riches, Honours and Dignities of it, ought not to adminiſter to Vanity, or to any luſtful Appetite or unwarrantable Enterprize, but that they are to be ſubſervient to Piety and a holy Life, and are to be faithfully employ'd and managed to the Honour of our great Patron and Benefactor, the real Benefit of our Brethren, and the univerſal Good of the World. The Conveniencies and Delights which God hath indulged us in, are to excite us to Thankfulneſs, and to create in us cheerful Minds whilſt we are about our Maſter's Service.

And then as to the *evil Things* of this World, we are to conceive aright of them alſo, *viz.* That they are not really evil in themſelves, and in their own Nature, but that they may and ought to be made uſe of to our greateſt Good and Advantage. Diſtreſs and Sufferings, and all the adverſe Accidents we encounter with in this Life, may be made inſtrumental to Religion and a godly Life. This was the Rate of the old Doctrine of the *Stoicks*, and no Chriſtian need be aſham'd of it. They tell us, that tho Calamities befall our Bodies, Eſtates, Friends, yet nothing which is hurtful can happen to us unleſs we will, for it is in our Power to receive ſome Good, to reap ſome Advantage from whatever befalls us. The Maſter of true Wiſdom knows how to deport himſelf in every State, ſo as he ſhall be able to be ſome way benefited by it. Though he cannot make himſelf rich and wealthy, none can hinder him from being contented. He can reſign himſelf to the Diſpoſal of Divine Providence, and that Reſignation makes him happy. What is the Reaſon? Becauſe he hath entertain'd true Apprehenſions of his Condition: he knows the Circumſtances he is in in this World, that is, he urges this often on his Thoughts, that he is travelling to another Country; that a little will ſerve him, a few Things will be ſufficient in the way; and that it is vain and ridiculous to covet thoſe Things, or to be diſturb'd at them which are wholly plac'd out of our Reach, and which God is not pleas'd to allow us in our Journey to Heaven. Thus a wiſe Man makes himſelf happy at a very cheap and eaſy Rate. Men of this Rank are happier in their greateſt Calamities than others uſe to be in their greateſt Fortunes, as they commonly call them.

4. He forms due Conceptions concerning *God the Diſpoſer and Governor of all.* He having given himſelf Leave to look Abroad, and ſee how Things go in the World, finds that there is no ſuch thing as Chance or Fortune, but that all Affairs are order'd with the greateſt Wiſdom and Juſtice imaginable: He is ſatisfied that that Divine, Infinite and Supreme Being that governs the World, doth all Things for the beſt; whence he concludes it reaſonable to receive with an even Hand and a quiet Mind, whatever happens to him. He finds it paſt his Skill to unfold all the Intrigues of Providence, and thinks it becometh him to reſt contented with all God's Actions, and to blame nothing but his own Ignorance and Shallowneſs. He is not ſolicitous to know the Reaſons of all that God doth, for he thinks it highly accountable that his Underſtanding, as well as his Will, ſhould ſubmit to the great Creator of the World. In brief, as he was perſuaded that the Things of the World and the Body itſelf, were to be ſubordinate to the Soul, and to be referr'd unto this, yea, and that the lower Faculties of the Soul were to ſubmit and truckle to the higher, ſo he holds, that theſe and all Things elſe ought to be ſubject unto God, by whom and for whom they were framed. Theſe are *ſound* and *true Principles*, theſe are *rights Notions* of Things; and theſe I reckon as the firſt main Thing wherein *true Wiſdom* conſiſts.

The other eſſential Part of Wiſdom is to *act* according to this Apprehenſion and Judgment of Things, to *live* according to theſe excellent Notions and Maxims. And here I ſhall farther demonſtrate to you, that *Piety* and *Wiſdom* are Terms convertible, and that it is impoſſible to be *wiſe* unleſs we be *religious*. In general then I ſay this, for a Man to act according to his Knowledge, to live according to what he profeſſeth, to be really what he appears to be, is an Argument of a wiſe Man, and the contrary is great Folly and Weakneſs. Certainly the Author of the Chriſtian Religion would not inſtitute any Thing that is contradictory and inconſiſtent

* Τὰ δὲ τοῦ τιμιωτέρου ἀγαθὰ τῶν ἧττον τιμίων τιμιώτερα. Max. Tyr. Diſſ. 24.

with itſelf; and yet ſuch ſhould Chriſtianity be after the Rate of ſome Mens Behaviour, who glorying in the *Name* of *Chriſtians*, act in oppoſition to the Laws and Rules of Chriſtianity. They never do as they ſay; their Actions and Profeſſions hold no Correſpondence with one another. *Pure Religion and undefiled before God even the Father is this, to viſit the Fatherleſs and Widows in their Affliction, and to keep himſelf unſpotted from the World.* So Religion was defined by that Apoſtle who was the great Patron of good Works, and cried down an idle and fruitleſs Faith. That is the beſt Religion, and worthy of its heavenly Author, which diſplays itſelf in the Actions and Deportments of Men, which reſtrains them from beloved Vices, checks their moſt pleaſurable Luſts, and is ever viſible and operative in their Lives.

Moſt Men know and every Day experience the World to be vain, Vice to be dangerous, and Integrity and Honeſty to be the choiceſt Poſſeſſions; and yet herein they betray their prodigious and intolerable Folly, that their Lives and Practices are no ways ſuitable to theſe Notions and Experiments; for they inordinately love the World, and proſecute its Vanities with mighty Paſſions; they live as if there were no Danger at all in the Commiſſion of Sin, and they act as if Honeſty was the Reproach and Blemiſh of a Man's Life. That there is a God and a Life to come, that there ſhall be eternal Rewards and Puniſhments hereafter, hath the general Suffrage and Approbation of Men; and yet they are ſeen to behave themſelves as if they did verily believe theſe Things to be Forgeries and Lies. Thus they walk Antipodes to themſelves, they run counter to their own Perſuaſions, they baffle their own Judgments, they contradict their own Notices and Apprehenſions, and ſo give themſelves the *Lye*, which with much Regret they would take at another's Hands.

It was a pleaſant Paſſage which I read of *Diogenes* the *Cynick*: When he was among the *Stoick* Philoſophers, and heard them diſputing in their Schools, he was obſerved to *go backwards*, and ſo to continue that unuſual Motion a conſiderable time. Of which when they demanded a Reaſon, he made this Reply; You may perhaps wonder (as I ſee you do) at this odd and awkard Carriage of mine, but let me tell you, it is but an Emblem of your more unhandſome and abſurd Demeanor, you are not aſhamed to go Retrograde in your Lives, to walk contrary to yourſelves, and to act as untowardly and croſly to all Reaſon and good Manners as may be. This is the Guiſe of the World, and it ſavours of the higheſt *Imprudence* and *Folly* imaginable. It muſt be an Act then of great *Wiſdom* to *walk accurately and circumſpectly*, or, as the ſame Apoſtle expreſſeth it elſewhere, *to make ſtreight Paths for our Feet*, to be conſiſtent with ourſelves, and to act according to the Principles we have eſpouſed, and the Conceptions we have framed in our Minds. This in general. Next, I will *particularly* ſhew you how a Chriſtian Man approves himſelf to be *truly wiſe* in *acting* agreeably to the *Apprehenſions* he hath.

I. He muſt needs be voted for a *wiſe Man* who makes choice of the *greateſt Good*, and pitcheth on the *chief and beſt End*, and minds the Things of the higheſt Concernment. This no ſober and intelligent Perſon can deny; and by this it is that a *godly Man* proves himſelf to be the Poſſeſſor of true Wiſdom. * *There be many that ſay, who will ſhew us any Good?* But by *Good* they mean no other than ſome Temporal and Senſual Object, they raiſe their Minds no higher. But the Language and Addreſſes of the holy Man are of another Quality, for thus he prays, *Lord, lift thou up the Light of thy Countenance upon us:* Vouchſafe us thy Favour which is the choiceſt Bleſſing, and with that we ſhall not be denied any Thing that is good for us. The Folly of Men is ſeen in nothing more than in their huge Miſtakes about their chief Good: and therefore here every good Man is exceeding cautious, and with great Deliberation chooſeth that which he knows to be abſolutely good and indiſpenſably neceſſary. And what is that? Happineſs. And what is that Happineſs? It is briefly this, to live in the Enjoyment of God, to love him and to be loved by him, to partake of his Favour here, and of his Glory hereafter: To have Communion with him in this Life, and to attain to Heaven in the other. This is the chief Good, this is the main Concernment which every wiſe Man looks after; and therefore it muſt needs be reckon'd an high act of *Prudence* in a godly Perſon, that he hath made this excellent Choice, that waving all petty and trifling Ends, he pitcheth upon this alone, as the only one Thing that is abſolutely neceſſary.

* Pſal 4.6.

2. He that is truly wiſe, after he hath propounded to himſelf and choſen the chiefeſt Good, will find out, and then uſe *the beſt and fitteſt Means* for the attaining of that End. And on this Account likewiſe, *Holineſs* is the *beſt Wiſdom*. The Chriſtian Man ſits down and ſeriouſly conſiders the Method which is preſcribed him, in order to his Happineſs, recollecting that peremptory Deciſion of St. *Peter*, *Neither is there Salvation in any other, for there*

there is no other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby they muſt be ſaved : He is told by St. *John, That this is Life eternal to know the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent.* Then he goes back to our Saviour's firſt Commiſſion to his Apoſtles, *Go ye into all the World, and preach the Goſpel to every Creature. He that believeth, and is baptized ſhall be ſaved, but he that beliveth not ſhall be damned.* Further, he ſees it is the Determination of the Doctor of the Gentiles, *That we are choſen unto Salvation by the Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth.* By laying all which Things together, he finds that *Knowing* and *Believing in* God and his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and being ſanctified by the Spirit are neceſſary to Salvation, and Life eternal. Wherefore he makes it his great Care to attain to Faith and Holineſs, and to be throughly furniſhed with all the Vertues and Graces of the Holy Spirit. He cordially aſſents unto the infallible Diſcoveries of the Goſpel, knowing that there cannot be any better Reaſon for his Aſſent and Belief than Divine Revelation, and the Teſtimony of God himſelf by Miracles. He, with great Sorrow, laments the Failures and Miſcarriages of his Life, and hath an unſpeakable Regret and Remorſe on his Mind for all his Offences againſt Heaven. He humbly and earneſtly implores the Divine Aid and Aſſiſtance, as being ſenſible that he can do nothing without it : He embraces all Opportunities of receiving ſpiritual Good and Advantage : He carefully conſults the holy Oracles of Scripture, which are able to make him wiſe unto Salvation : And as he was born into the Chriſtian Church by Baptiſm, ſo he is bred up and nouriſhed all his Days by the Word of God read and preached, and by the other bleſſed Sacrament of the Euchariſt.

This is the Method which the Goſpel preſcribes, this is the plain Road to Heaven, and he reſolves to continue in it to the End of his Days. Thus the *Means* are exactly fitted to the *End*, and in that a great Prudence is diſcovered. And hence it appears that he, who at a venture, calls himſelf a Chriſtian, and hopes (he ſaith) for Heaven hereafter, and yet makes not uſe of theſe Means here in order to it, is very abſurd and unreaſonable : But that Man is wiſe and conſiderate who having choſen the chief End, uſes theſe proper Means for the accompliſhing of it, and removes all thoſe Obſtacles out of the Way, which may hinder him from compaſſing his propoſed End.

3. True *Wiſdom* teacheth us to regard this End, and theſe Means in the *firſt place*, and to employ ourſelves about them betimes. Where Delays and Demurrs may prove exceeding dangerous, a wiſe Man counts it his Intereſt to make haſte, and to make ſure of his Happineſs the firſt thing he doth. No prudent Perſon will truſt to that which is uncertain, frail, and flitting. And ſuch is our Duration on Earth, ſuch is our Life, and ſuch is our Health; therefore he will not preſume on any of theſe. He knows if he ſhould miſcarry, it may be too late to ſee his Fault ; or if he ſees it, it may be too late to amend it. One of our *Engliſh* Kings delay'd *Columbus* too long, when he came to him with a Promiſe of diſcovering a new World, but in that gave but little Proof of his *Wiſdom*, which otherwiſe he was eminent for. A better World than this, the *New Jeruſalem* above (which is the main Diſcovery of the Goſpel-times) is tendered to us all, and it is our Purchaſe, if we pleaſe : But then we muſt uſe no Delays and Procraſtinations, but proſecute this Buſineſs with our moſt early Endeavours, otherwiſe we ſhall fall ſhort of it. They were *Fooliſh Virgins* (and juſtly ſo ſtiled) who ſpent their Hours vainly, and made no Proviſion for the Bridegroom's coming, but then went to buy Oil, when he was juſt at their Doors, and the Shops were ſhut up. Among the many Evils which attend *Folly*, * this is one, ſaith the admirable moral Philoſopher, That it makes Men delay their amending of their Lives, and they are always *beginning* to live. This is great *Folly* indeed, and we muſt take Care to avoid it, we eſpecially who are Chriſtians, and know the Worth of our immortal Spirits. He that careleſly and unconcernedly ſuffers the Minutes to fly away, when no leſs than the Salvation of his Soul is concerned deſerves not to be entruſted with any future Portions of Time. This is but a juſt Recompence of his Folly and Indiſcretion.

* Inter cætera mala hoc quoq; habet Stultitia, ſemper incipit vivere. *Sen.* Epiſt. 130.

4. It is approved *Wiſdom* to part with a *leſſer Good*, that we may make ourſelves ſure of a far *greater*, and to undergo ſome lighter Evils to put ourſelves out of Danger of falling into thoſe which are more heavy and grievous. Thus, the cunning Wreſtler is not aſhamed to take a Foil, that he may eſcape a flat Fall.

The Fencer receives a Blow on his Arm, to ſave his Head. In a great Tempeſt, the richeſt Lading is caſt into the Sea, to ſecure the Veſſel and the Paſſengers Lives. We are willing to recover Health and prolong Life by Abſtinence, and great Severity on the Body. We are contented to be ſick, that we may be well. We ſubmit, to ſave our Life, to the Loſs of a Limb, we let a Part go, to ſave the whole. All theſe Actions are thought to be regulated (and moſt certainly they are) by right Reaſon, and were ever reckoned as Inſtances of humane Prudence. And on the ſame Score muſt he that is truly *Religious*, be concluded to be the Owner of a ſingular Prudence and Diſcretion. He denieth himſelf the ſinful Pleaſures of the World, and by that Means aſſures to himſelf thoſe Pleaſures which are at God's right Hand for evermore. He ſeems to caſt away his Riches. *i. e.* he refuſes all unlawful and ſinful Gain; and by doing ſo, he is a greater Gainer hereafter. He, according to his Lord's Command, cuts off his right Hand, and plucks out his right Eye, and thereby ſecures his whole Man from the eternal Torments of Hell. You know who it was unto whom the Loſs of his Father's Aſſes proved an Occaſion of finding a Crown. If a righteous Perſon ſuffer the Loſs of Earthly and Mean Things, and thereby puts himſelf into Poſſeſſion of an heavenly Kingdom, a Crown that fadeth not away, he cannot be ſaid to have acted indiſcreetly and unadviſedly, but on the contrary, it muſt be acknowledg'd that he hath done like a wiſe and prudent Man.

5thly, and *laſtly*, It is certain, and it will hardly meet with any Gain-ſayer, that that Perſon proves himſelf to be *wiſe and prudent*, who ſeeing the Uncertainty and Changeableneſs of this preſent State, makes *certain Proviſion for the future*. This is the Wiſdom of a godly Man: He takes a Proſpect of the other World, whilſt he ſtands upon this. Even now, when his Soul and Body are united, he entertains ſerious Thoughts of their Separation, and of the ſurviving of his better Part after this Life. He knows that all he doth at preſent hath Relation to the future: and this Knowledge gives him the Denomination of *Wiſe*. This hath been the Senſe of the underſtanding Part of the World in all Times, even of thoſe, who made made no good Uſe of it themſelves. * It is the Part of a wiſe Man, ſaith *Pliny*, to have a Foreſight of all thoſe Things which ſhall happen afterwards. And the *Comedian* agrees with him, ſaying, † This is the true Notion of being wiſe, not only to ſee thoſe Things which are before us, but to have an Eye to what is to come. It is the *Chorus* in one of *Euripides*'s Tragedies, where he corrects the Confidence and Preſumption of ſome thriving Man:† Have Regard (ſaith he) to what is to come, lay your Plot for Futurity, for the Courſe of Things is oftentimes overturned by God. This preſent Show and Scene of Things will not laſt long, and he that is *wiſe* will prepare for that which will ſucceed in the Place of it. *Nothing ſhould be * unlooked for and unprovided*, ſaith a great Man, *our Thoughts ſhould anticipate every Thing, not only what is wont to happen, but what may happen.* Thus we are taught by *Heathens*, the very ſame that the inſpired Writers, but with greater Authority, ſuggeſt to us.

Solomon ſends the improvident Perſon to the *Ant*, to learn this *Wiſdom* from her, *Conſider her Ways and be wiſe: She provideth her Meat in the Summer, and gathereth her Food in the Harveſt.* And hence is that Aphoriſm of the ſame Princely Author, *He that gathereth in Summer is a wiſe Son.* So the Steward in the Goſpel, is commended by our Saviour, becauſe he had *done wiſely*, i. e. had conſidered of what was to come, and had provided for himſelf againſt the Time he was to be diſcarded from his Office. A much greater Inſtance of Prudence it muſt needs be to employ our Thoughts about what ſhall be after this Life, and to make Proviſion for it. We muſt make it our main Care to ſecure the Intereſt of Eternity, and to value that above Time, it being infinitely the more conſiderable Duration: For it is no difficult Matter to tell which is longer, threeſcore Years and ten, or Eternity; Man's Life here, or the endleſs Spaces of it hereafter. It cannot then but be thought to be a Proof of an unqueſtionable *Wiſdom* to prefer this before that, and however Things go with us now, and what Shipwreck ſoever we ſuffer here, to inſure our Veſſel in the other wider Ocean of Eternity. To this End it will concern us to think of, and prepare for Death, which is the Entrance into that other State. It is no Piece of Daſtardy (as one of the *Roman Emperours* reckoned it) but rather a laudable and manly Thing,

*Hoc nam Sapientis eſt, omnia quæ futura ſunt providere.

† Hoc eſt ſapere, non quod ante pedes modo eſt videre, ſed etiam illa quæ futura ſunt proſpicere.

Ὅρα τὸ μέλλον πολλ' ἀναστρέφει θεός.

to think often, and ſpeak freely of that which we are haſtening to, and which in a ſhort Time we ſhall be acquainted with. That this is *Wiſdom* is implied in that Wiſh of *Moſes, O that they were wiſe, that they would conſider their latter End*! And in that Prayer of the ſame holy Man, *So teach us to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wiſdom.* As it is groſs Folly and Imprudence to flatter our ſelves with the Hopes of living always here, and never to have Death in our Thoughts, nor the Grave in our Eye, that thereby we may be reminded to prepare for the future; ſo on the other ſide, it is a Point of incomparable *Wiſdom* to meditate frequently on our laſt Change, and to provide for that State which ſhall be unchangeable, and remain the ſame to all eternal Ages.

Of all that hath been ſaid, this is the final Reſult, 1. Here is a Baffle to all the poor *Pretenders* to Wiſdom. 2. Here is a Diſcovery to the World of *True and real Wiſdom.* And conſequently, in the 3d, and laſt Place, Here is a Demonſtration of the *Excellency of Chriſtianity and a holy Life.*

1. The poor *Pretenders to Wiſdom* are baffled, and the meer Shews and Semblances of it in the World are utterly diſgraced. You muſt know then, that there is a ſeeming counterfeit Wiſdom: and there is a real and ſubſtantial Wiſdom, which juſtly deſerves that Name. There is a Wiſdom that is verboſe and talkative only, and there is a ſolid, ſtable and fixed Wiſdom, as *Maximus Tyrius* † diſtinguiſheth. The former of theſe, which is but a Shadow, is divided by St. *James* Chap. 3. v. 15. into *Earthly*, *Senſual* and *Deviliſh*.

There is firſt an *Earthly Wiſdom*, which inſpires Men with Thoughts and Deſires of worldly Gain and Profit: By this they become cunning and crafty in ſecular Affairs, and are ſkill'd how to lie and cheat with a Grace, and to have a handſome Conveyance for every unjuſt Action. By this they are reconciled to all Sorts of Drudgery and Fatigue: and nothing is hard which brings Profit with it, nothing is heavy, ſo it loads them with *thick Clay*, ſo it preſents them with the Gifts of *Mammon* their beloved Deity. Every Thing is a God, a *Jupiter* with them, that deſcends into their Laps in a *Golden Shower.* Of theſe *Children of this World* our Saviour ſaith, *Luke* xvi. 8. *They are in their Generation wiſer than the Children of Light.*

There is a *Senſual Wiſdom* alſo, and the wiſe Men of this Rank are not a few. For every voluptuous and ſwiniſh Epicure is to be enrolled in this Catalogue of *Sophies*. And I may well call them ſo, for like the effeminate *Perſian Kings* of old they deny themſelves no Pleaſure or Delight whatſoever. 'Tis a Folly for a Man to defraud his Genius, is a ſettled Maxim among them; and hence they take a Taſt of all Delights, and if they like them, they glut themſelves with them. They uſe their Wit and Invention to find out new Pleaſures, leſt the old ones ſhould grow nauſeous. Theſe Perſons affect the Life of Beaſts, and live altogether by Senſe: And he is the *wiſeſt* amongſt them that is leaſt a Man, and hath moſt of the Brute.

There is likewiſe a *Deviliſh Wiſdom*, the Wiſdom of the old Serpent, who wound himſelf into *Paradiſe*, and there inveigl'd our firſt Parents, whence all our Miſeries ariſe.

And there are not a few of the *Deiſts wiſe* ones at this Day, as well as there have been in all Ages who are wily and crafty in ſinning, who uſe their Wit and Parts in their Vices, and who ſtudy to delude and ſeduce poor, ignorant ſilly Souls. Of this *Triple Wiſdom* we may truly pronounce that it is *Folly*, the worſt of Folly. And of thoſe who are the Maſters of it, we may ſay in the Words of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, Chap. iv. v. 22. *They are fooliſh, they know not God, they are ſottiſh Children, they have no Underſtanding: They are wiſe to do Evil, but to do Good they have no Knowledge.*

2. From what hath been ſaid, there is a plain *Diſcovery of true and ſubſtantial Wiſdom.* I have let you ſee that it is a very large and comprehenſive Thing: It conſiſts both in Knowledge and Practice. It is not only a right Judgment of thoſe Things which are Divine, and appertain to Faith and Obedience, but it is acting according to that Knowledge and Judgment of thoſe Divine matters. Take this in the plain and expreſs Words of that Primitive Father, * All the Wiſdom of Man (ſaith he) conſiſts in this alone, that he knows God, and ſerves and worſhips him. This is the Doctrine we publiſh, this is our Perſuaſion. He can efficaciouſly uſe his Reaſon, to know what is Right and Good,

† Σοφία λαλιστέρα, καὶ σοφία στάσιμος καὶ ἑδραία.

* Omnis Sapientia hominis in hoc uno eſt, ut Deum cognoſcat & colat. Hoc eſt dogma, hæc ſententia eſt. *Lactan.* l. 3.

and then performs what he knows to be ſo, is truly wiſe. The right Chriſtian Wiſdom teacheth a Man to conſult his Good in thoſe Things which concern his Salvation; and accordingly directs him to order all his Actions, and to make uſe of thoſe *Means* which are fitteſt to bring about the bleſſed *End* he aims at. And when at any Time he ſlips and offends, it teacheth him to recover himſelf forthwith by unfeigned Repentance, which is * *being wiſe again.* You ſee what is the Character of a wiſe and underſtanding Man: And it appears from what hath been ſaid, that a *godly Man*, is Maſter of the beſt Underſtanding, and the trueſt Wiſdom. † It is evident that *Wiſdom* is incorporated into *Religion*, ſo that it is a vain Attempt to ſeparate them: For to be wiſe, is nothing elſe than to know God, and ſerve him. This is *ſound Wiſdom*, Prov. ii. 7. The *Hebrew* Word in that Place is render'd by the *Septuagint* * *Salvation*, to let us underſtand that *Wiſdom* and *Salvation* are Terms reciprocal, and that to be *wiſe to Salvation* is the *ſoundeſt Wiſdom.* This is call'd *Wiſdoms* * in the Plural Number, *Prov.* i. 20, ix. 1. to expreſs to us the tranſcendent Eminency and Excellency of this Wiſdom, and conſequently of a religeous Life. Which brings me to the

Third and laſt Inference from theſe Words, *viz.* That hence we have a Demonſtration of the *Excellency of Religion and a holy Life*, and conſequently a prevalent Motive to the embracing of them. There cannot be a greater Incentive to Godlineſs than this, that it is the greateſt Wiſdom. It was an ancient Saying, * ſaith *Philo*, He that acts wiſely and prudently doth all Things well. We ſee this really verified in the Matter before us, for the *Religious* Man is the wiſe Man, and this is he that *doth every thing well*: And again, he that doth ſo, *acts wiſely.* For Religion and Holineſs are the moſt approved Policy, and there is no ſuch prudent Way to ſecure our Happineſs, as by being virtuous and pious. This holds good likewiſe in the larger Concernments of the Publick: As is chiefly intimated in this Exhortation of *Moſes* to the *Iſraelites*, *Behold, I have taught you Statutes and Judgments; Keep therefore, and do them, for this is your Wiſdom and your Underſtanding in the Sight of the Nations, which ſhall hear all theſe Statutes, and ſhall ſay, Surely this great Nation is a wiſe and underſtanding People.* A Text well worthy the Obſervation of the greateſt Head-pieces, and moſt reaching Stateſmen. If they would urge upon their Thoughts the Words of this wiſe Law-giver, they would not diſcharge themſelves of their *Conſciences*, as Incumbrances to their State-Deſigns, but they would conclude it to be the grand Wiſdom of a Nation to obey God and keep his Laws, to maintain Religion, and the true Worſhip of God, which are the beſt Buttereſſes and Props of a Kingdom, to diſcountenance all Atheiſm and Debauchery, which are both the Reproach and Ruin of a Land.

To conclude, This Doctrine concerns us all. Seeing *the Fear of the Lord is the Beginning*, the Head, the main Part of Wiſdom, let it be our chief and only Study how we may fear and worſhip God aright, and walk religiouſly and uprightly in the whole Courſe of our Lives, and let us be afraid of nothing ſo much as offending God, and doing that which is ſinful and wicked. If we be thus *wiſe*, we are *wiſe to purpoſe*; and at the laſt Accounts of Dooms-day, and at the great and impartial Audit of the World, we ſhall be openly pronounc'd ſuch: And then *thoſe that are wiſe ſhall ſhine as the Brightneſs of the Firmament, and as the Stars for ever and ever.*

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* Μετανοεῖν, Reſipiſere, iterum ſapere.

† In ſapientia religio, & in religione ſapientia eſt, ergo non poteſt ſegregari, quia ſapere nihil aliud eſt niſi Deum verum juſtis ac piis cultibus honorare. *Lact*, l. 4. c. 3.

* Σωτηρία

חָכְמוֹת

* Ὁ φρονίμως ποιῶν εὖ ποιεῖ πάντα.

THE FOLLY OF SIN.

Psal. xlix. 13.

This their Way is their Folly.

THERE can be no greater Evidence of the Degeneracy and Corruption of Mankind, than their fond Purſuits after the Things which are light and momentary, and their wilful Neglect of thoſe which are of the greateſt Value and higheſt Concern. Of this unaccountable and groſs Miſtake the Royal Prophet treats in this Pſalm, ſummoning firſt of all the whole World to be Auditors and Judges in the Caſe, *Hear this all ye People, give ear all ye Inhabitants of the World, both low and high, rich and poor together,* v. 1. And then he proceeds to a juſt Character of the Perſons whom he deſigned to reflect upon, *they that truſt in their Wealth, and boaſt themſelves in the multitude of their Riches. Their inward Thought is that their Houſes ſhall continue for ever, and their Dwelling-places to all Generations,* and more to this Purpoſe, from the 5th to the 12th Verſe. So debaſing a Character cannot but meet with a ſuitable Doom and Sentence, which follows in the next Words, *Man being in Honour abideth not,* or as you read in the laſt Verſe of the Pſalm, *Man that is in Honour, and un-*

derſtandeth not is like the Beaſts that periſh; that is, thoſe that act againſt the Laws of their Creation, in purſuing ſuch mean and unworthy Enterprizes, that ſpend their Days in Vanity and Luxury, in Forgetfulneſs of God and a better World, that indulge their exorbitant Appetites and Deſires without Control, and expect and place all their Happineſs in ſenſual Enjoyments; in a Word, thoſe that wilfully ſin againſt their Maker, and do Things repugnant to right Reaſon and their own Conſciences, though they appear in human Shape, and wear the Countenances of Men, yet they really have ſunk themſelves below their proper Species, and have put off the Manlike Nature, and are become like the Beaſts that periſh.

Accordingly therefore doth the *Pſalmiſt* adjoin, v. 14. *Like Sheep they are laid in the Grave, and Death ſhall feed on them.* As their Life was Senſual and Brutiſh, ſo their Death is reckon'd to be of a reſembling Nature, and is of no other Value in the Eye of Heaven than the expiring of Brute Animals. But if this of *Beaſts* ſeems to be too degrading a Title for theſe Sinners, that other of *Fools* will exactly fit them (which yet will be ſound to be of the ſame Import with the former), and this is it which my Text faſtens upon them, *This their Way is their Folly*. And it is no leſs ſo becauſe *their Poſterity approve their Sayings*, as the *Pſalmiſt* adds, for there will be ſome that will be Heirs to their Folly as well as to their Revenues and Eſtates.

Thus we have briefly glanced upon the Context, and the Propoſition which we ſhall inſiſt upon (as a juſt Remark upon the Words) is this, that the Man who acts wickedly and prophanely, who breaks the righteous and juſt Laws of his Maker (let him pretend in the mean time what he will, and ſet never ſo fair a Gloſs upon his Actions) in the Account of Heaven and in the Eſteem of all ſober and intelligent Perſons (who are the moſt competent Judges in this Caſe) is a Fool and a crazed Perſon, he hath debauched his Mind, abandoned his Reaſon, quitted his Underſtanding, and he acts like a weak Perſon and an Idiot. *This his Way is his Folly*. As I have then already (in another Diſcourſe) convinc'd you of the *Wiſdom* of keeping God's Commands, ſo now my Task at preſent is, to diſplay before you the *Folly*, if not the *Madneſs*, of Sinners. And theſe enſuing Particulars will fully repreſent it to you.

1. It is egregious Folly to *rely upon falſe Principles*, to build upon tottering and deceitful Foundations; and yet ſo doth every vitious Perſon. He diſcards all Principles of right Reaſon and Underſtanding, and ſteers himſelf only by thoſe which are apparently falſe, and have no other Bottom than his own deluded Fancy. It would be too great a Task to reckon up all thoſe falſe Propoſitions and unſound Arguments which the generality of Sinners build upon. I will only offer to you two of the chief, and which have influence upon the reſt. This then is one, (and the abſurdeſt of all) that the Almighty is not in good Earneſt with Mankind, and that God will not do as he ſaith. This was the falſe Notion which ruined our firſt Parents; our poor weak Mother *Eve* gave no Credit to what her Maker had told her, but eaſily believ'd the Serpent which was inſpired by the Devil. *In the Day thou eateſt thou ſhall ſurely die*, ſaid God: But, *Ye ſhall not ſurely die*, ſaid the Serpent. The Woman confided in this latter, and diſregarded the former. And the whole Race of *Adam* are miſled after the ſame Manner; they are ſo fooliſh and ſottiſh as to believe Satan rather than God, to credit him who was a Liar from the Beginning, and is the Father of Lies, and to give no Heed to him who is Truth it ſelf, and cannot lie. If this be not egregious *Folly*, it will be hard to tell what is. Will not every conſiderate Man ſay that it is more reaſonable to believe God the Father of Spirits and the Lover of Souls, than to liſten to the Suggeſtions of the profeſſed Enemy and Deſtroyer of them.

Again. This is another falſe and erroneous Principle which preſumptuous Sinners rely upon, that their daily and multiplied Offences againſt God, and open Provocations of his Majeſty will either be forgiven them without Repentance, or that Repentance is a very eaſy Matter, and may ſoon be diſpatched, and all is well again. It is too evident that this fond Miſtake actuates the Minds of Men, and upon this falſe Surmiſe, they perſiſt in their Sins, and add Iniquity to Iniquity, and as they grow in Years increaſe in Wickedneſs. A ſhort Ejaculation, a ſingle Collect they think will ſerve their Turns when they are leaving the World. Some ſickly Wiſhes and faint Reſolves, they ſay, will be a ſufficient Paſs-port to convey them into *Abraham*'s Boſom. Some few Sighs, they hope, will waft them ſafe over to another and a better Shore. And thus deceiving themſelves, they revell in all ſorts of Vice, and commit Sin with Greedineſs, and no evil Enterprize comes amiſs to them; for it is but repenting at laſt, and that is ſoon done, and God is forthwith reconciled.

What wiſe and underſtanding Man doth not ſee that theſe are falſe and groundleſs Notions, and conſequently that the Foundation which Sinners build upon is weak and feeble? And is it not palpable Folly to be thus ſtrangely miſled and impos'd upon by fond Perſuaſions? Is it not intolerable Sottiſhneſs to prefer their own wild Opinions and Fancies before the Diſcourſes of the wiſeſt Men, nay even before the Dictates of the holy Oracles of Scripture which cannot deceive them, and which have peremptorily determined againſt them. Thus the Foundation of every Sin is a Lie and an arrant Faſhood; 'tis a Principle without Reaſon, and which no underſtanding Man will allow of. And that is the firſt Particular I offer'd you, namely, that 'tis egregious Folly to rely upon falſe Principles, to build upon ſandy Foundations; and yet every vicious Perſon doth ſo. Now, it will be no Wonder that he who talks ignorantly and fooliſhly ſhould act ſo, that he whoſe Principles and Diſcourſes are erroneous, ſhould do Things that are weak and abſurd. Obſerve we therefore in the next Place the *Practice* of Sinners, and infer thence their *Folly*.

2. Then, it is a high piece of Folly to take up and content ourſelves with *ſmall Things*, when we may be more welcome to *greater*, to ſtrive for petty Matters, and in the mean time to neglect thoſe of Moment,to aim only at baſe and unworthy Ends, when we have high and noble ones to buſy ourſelves about; and yet this every Sinner is apparently guilty of, and thereby betrays his Folly. Children and Fools pick Straws, and tie Knots on Bull-ruſhes, entertain themſelves with Trifles and Impertinencies, and we may gravely ſmile at theſe their Follies, and think we can do no leſs when we take Notice of them. But alas their Sport is our earneſt, and their Childiſh Toys and Rattles are but Emblems of Mens ſerious Employments and Buſineſſes. To hunt after Riches, and to take ſuch Pains to purchaſe that which will not long tarry with us, or we may not with it; to run out of breath for that which is no better than a Blaſt, vain Applauſe; to venture ſo furiouſly at Things with apparent Danger of loſing them, and rendring our State more miſerable than it could be ſuppoſed to be ever before,to diſturb and diſquiet ourſelves, when we might live at Peace, to hunt with great Eagerneſs after Wealth and Riches to no other Ends than to hide them, or ſpend them in Vanity, *i. e.* to be covetous or profuſe; in brief, to live many Years in the World, and yet to do nothing in it that is manly and wiſe, to purſue no End that is Praiſe-worthy and excellent, all this expreſſes inſufferable *Folly*, and no Man can be ſaid to be *wiſe* that acts thus.

Nay, is not all this a Proof of what was hinted before, that the Follies of *Men* far ſurpaſs thoſe of *Children*? Parents are more vain and childiſh than their little ones, whoſe Follies ſometimes they ſo judiciouſly laugh at, and ſeem to diſdain. Say that *they* buſy themſelves whole Days in catching Butterflies, and pleaſe themſelves with looking upon the gaudy and party-colour'd Veſtments of thoſe Creatures. Theſe are but fitting Entertainments for their Age, and they can ſoar no higher. But may not the Gay and Pied Coats which thoſe fluttering Inſects wear, and which the Children are ſo much taken with, remind their grown Parents what Livery they deſerve to have their greater Folly expreſs'd by? *Theſe* as well as *they* play with Toys, and ſport with Flies, and (which is the higher Inſtance of their Folly) do it ſoberly and in good Earneſt. Theſe run after painted Pleaſures, theſe catch at uncertain Riches, which *make themſelves Wings and fly away*. No nobler or better Game do they reach at. *Seneca* ſaith well, * we are paſt our Childhood, but not our Childiſh Manners and fooliſh Actions. What is it but a Child's or a Fool's Bargain to barter Pearls and Diamonds for ſorry Pebbles, or painted Glaſs, or ſome ſuch Trifles? And yet this is but a Reſemblance of the more abſurd Practice of grown Men,and at full Age, but I cannot ſay arriv'd to Years of Diſcretion: For they traffick Heaven for Earth, and their Souls for *thick Clay*. We read of a People that prefer'd their Swine before our Saviour, and we are told that *Judas* rated his Maſter at thiry Pieces of Silver; and every Day we ſee that Men ſell their Souls for a few Shillings, or a ſmaller Sum. Natural Fools and Idiots prefer Toys before Gold; but the irreligious Fool values both them and Gold above his Maker. He prizes Mock-joys before laſting and real Happineſs, tranſitory and worldly Pleaſures before thoſe that are Spiritual and Divine, which are the only ones that are ſuitable to his immortal Nature. And ſo I paſs to the next Particular.

* Non pueritia in nobis, ſed puerilitas remanet.

3. He in the Accounts of all intelligent Perſons is no other than a Fool, who being left to his Liberty and Choice, chuſes *Senſual* and *Earthly Delights* before thoſe that are *Spiritual* and *Intellectual*; and this is the Guiſe of all Sinners. Thus (to examine a little their particular Follies) the *Intemperate* and *Luxurious* Perſon moſt vainly eſteems the Pleaſures of the Taſte and the Delights of the Palate, above the more noble Reliſhes of Divine and Heavenly Joys, which are the Repaſt of the Bleſſed, and the Food of Angels. The *Laſcivious* Perſon unreaſonably values the tranſitory Emotions of his Luſt and lewd

Deſires before the greater and more cheriſhing Flames of Divine Love. The *Covetous* hugs his Gold and Siver, and broods over his Bags with a mighty Pleaſure, preferring this before that other more generous and noble one of doing good with his Wealth, of relieving ſome poor and comfortleſs Widow, of ſuccouring ſome Fatherleſs Child, of chearing the Heart of ſome good Man who is fallen into Poverty, and is ready to periſh. I appeal to any wiſe Man, whether this be not a greater and more ſubſtantial Pleaſure than the other, whether this will not create a more laſting Comfort in a Man's Mind. And the ſame is to be ſaid of all the Pleaſures which accompany the performance of good and holy Actions: They are ſolid and durable, they are real and ſubſtantial, becauſe indeed they are Spiritual and Divine. But ſilly Birds will fly to painted Grapes; deluded Sinners proſecute thoſe Delights which are falſe and counterfeit: They hunt after meer Shadows *, than which there cannot be a greater Evidence of their Folly. The *Frantick Grecian* I ſuppoſe you have heard of, who perſuaded himſelf that all the Ships which came into the Haven of *Athens* were his own, and he ſet them down in his Book, and counted himſelf a great Merchant and very Rich. Such is the Folly of moſt Sinners, they reckon upon, and tickle themſelves with, thoſe Delights which they ſhall never poſſeſs. The Chaſe and Purſuit is always more conſiderable and greater than the Poſſeſſion, and not one in ten thouſand finds that Satisfaction which he expected and fancied. And what is the Reaſon? Becauſe theſe Things are not ſuitable to the Nature of Man, as he is a Rational and Underſtanding Being. The Pleaſures of Sin are either Brutiſh or Fantaſtical, and ſo they are not fit for Men, who are Maſters of Reaſon and Underſtanding, and ſhould chiefly employ themſelves about thoſe Things which are Spiritual and Divine.

4. Is it not *Folly* to mind thoſe Things only which are *preſent*, and to have no Eye at all to *Futurity*? Do not Sinners merit for this ſtrange Improvidence and Stupidity to be reckon'd among ‡ Idiots and Sots? Nay, do they not deſerve for this to be ranged among Brute Beaſts, who mind only what is directly before them, but have no Senſe of that which is to come? Oppoſite unto which is the Poſture of the *Prudent Man*, who *Janus* like is double faced, he not only entertains his Eye with Things that are paſt and preſent, but he looks forward to what is future, and dwells on the Thoughts of thoſe great Things which are to be hereafter. By Faith, which is founded on infallible Revelation, he expects future Treaſures, Riches, Honours and Delights; and on this Perſuaſion and Hope, he deſpiſes this vain World, and is reſolved never to dote on its gaudy and glittering Follies. Not that he bids adieu to Society, and turns Religion into Melancholy and Solitude, but he lets not this World gain any great Portion of his Affections, or divert him from thinking of and preparing for, that future State in the other Life. He never ſo entertains himſelf with Things preſent as not to ingage his Thoughts chiefly about thoſe to come. But this latter is the daily Practice of vicious Livers, and therefore they cannot eſcape the Title of *Fools*.

This Folly is excellently repreſented to us by our Saviour, in the Parable of the rich Man, *Luke* 12. 18, 19. where we are told that he pull'd down his leſſer Barns, and ſet up greater, to ſtore his vaſt Incomes in. In this he did not amiſs, and none can juſtly blame him for it. But he offended in ſaying to his Soul, *Soul, thou haſt much Goods laid up for many Years, take thine Eaſe, eat, drink and be merry.* He was a right *Fool*, he could not *reckon*, he knew not how to *number*; he was not ſenſible that his *many Years* would not amount to *one Day*. He lived as if he were to continue here always, he made it his Buſineſs to gratify his ſenſual Deſires, and gorge himſelf with Carnal Pleaſures, and *to morrow* he thought *ſhould be as this Day, and much more abundantly*. He ſatisfied himſelf with this, that he was ſufficiently provided for *this Life*, and as for the *other*, he troubled not his Head about it. But mark, what Doom awaits him, *God ſaid unto him, thou Fool, this Night thy Soul ſhall be required of thee. Then whoſe ſhall thoſe Things be which thou haſt provided? So is he that layeth up Treaſure for himſelf, and is not rich toward God*; Whoſoever he be, he juſtly deſerves the Name of *Fool*, and ſuch he ſhall be reputed to be, as well as this rich Man, who is a *Fool* upon Record for minding his *Barns* more than the *Manſions* above, for preferring Things preſent, and thoſe Uncertain, before future Certainties in the World to come. *Eſau* will never wear off the Imputation of *Folly* for ſelling his Birth-right, to gratify his preſent Appetite. But the whole Race of wicked Men act a great deal more *fooliſhly*; they ſell Heaven and Eternal Happineſs for the indulging of

* Πολλῆς ἀνοίας ϗ τὸ θηρᾶσθαι κενά. Sophocl. in Electrâ.

‡ Νήπιοι, ἀγροιῶται, ἐφημέρια φρονέοντες. Hom. Odyſſ. φ.

of their ſinful Luſts. They part with certain Riches and Pleaſures in Reverſion, for the preſent but uncertain Enjoyment of thoſe Things which go by thoſe Names here. But let any impartial Man ſay, who but a *Fool* would do this? Who but a beſotted Idiot would loſe the never fading Joys of Heaven for the Pleaſures of Sin for a Seaſon, for the ſhort and momentary Delights which accompany Vice upon Earth.

5. Can it be deem'd any other than *Folly* and *Madneſs* to be at much trouble *to be damn'd*, and to take great Pains to purchaſe the eternal Torments of Hell, and to fit ones ſelf for the Devil. If Men will needs be *Fools*, it is to be wiſhed that they would be ſo in Matters of leſſer Moment, that they would confine their Folly to their meaner Concernments; that they would not be Fools in the great Buſineſs of their Immortal Souls. But ſuch all willful Sinners are, and by nothing can they proclaim their *Folly* louder. It was complain'd of at *Rome* in the Days of *Nero* and other bloody Emperors, that Death itſelf was grown coſtly, and Criminals could not be executed without large Fees; but hardned Sinners buy their Death and Damnation at a very dear Rate, and yet are never heard to complain of it, which argues their prodigious Madneſs and Stupidity. Is it not true that ſome torment themſelves more for a fooliſh Luſt, and the Satiſfaction of it, than others can poſſibly for the avoiding and baniſhing it? Doth not the Confluence of Wealth, and the great Accumulation of Pleaſures and Honours, eſpecially when unlawfully purchaſed, prove injurious to the Poſſeſſors? as the great Draught and Multitude of Fiſhes which you read of in the Goſpel, was dangerous, and hazarded the Loſs of the Ship, and of the Men in it. Exceſs and Intemperance are Things really troubleſome, and you can't poſſibly imagine that the greateſt Abſtinence and auſtereſt Mortification have ſo much of Difficulty in them. Yet ſuch is the unaccountable *Folly* of the corrupted World, that they purſue Pleaſure and Eaſe, and fancy they ſhall meet with theſe in Sin and Vice. Will no Fruit pleaſe them but the forbidden only? Can no Delights ſerve them but ſuch as will damn them? Are perfect Slavery and Bondage grown ſo deſirable that Men will court them? Such is *Sin* aſſuredly, and it is not the leſs ſo becauſe Vicious Perſons do not think it to be ſuch. I have read of ſome *Ethiopian Slaves* whoſe Chains were of Gold; but by being ſo they did not ceaſe to be Chains. What if ſome delight in their Miſery, and are in love with their Shackles? What if they are contented Vaſſals, and dance to the Muſick of their Fetters? This Mirth will ſoon have an End, and the Cloſe of it will be very ſad and diſtracting; yea, their very Pleaſures will prove their Pain and Torment.

6. I proceed to another Inſtance of the Sinner's *Folly*. What Title but that of *Fool* ought to be faſtened upon him, who pretending to Eternal Happineſs hereafter, never uſeth thoſe *Means* which are proportioned to that great *End?* And yet all the World ſees that there are Men, who ſtile themſelves *Chriſtians*, that do after this Faſhion. They ſay they would fain arrive to everlaſting Joys above, and yet they will not be perſuaded to enter into thoſe Ways here below that lead to them. They deſire to be bleſſed, but take no Care how they ſhall obtain a Thing ſo important. They own the beſt Religion in the World, and hope for Heaven, and expect to come thither in good time; but if you look into their Lives and Manners, you will believe no ſuch Thing. If theſe Men hold it for an infallible Truth, that *nothing that is unclean ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, and that *without Holineſs it is impoſſible to ſee God*; why then do they live at that Rate as if the contrary was a moſt certain Propoſition? What greater Argument can be alledged of the ſtupendious Folly even of Chriſtian Men?

It will be granted, I ſuppoſe, that if the Unclean and Laſcivious Perſon certainly knew that he ſhould at ſuch a time be ſurpriz'd in his unlawful Embraces and ſlain, ἐπαυτοφόρῳ, he would lay aſide the Thoughts of gratifying his lewder Appetite at that Seaſon: And yet the ſame Perſon is aſſured (ſo that he cannot poſſibly doubt of it) that *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge*, and that *they ſhall have their Part in that Lake which burns with Fire and Brimſtone.* If the intemperate Man knew where a Club of the debauched were met together, to fill themſelves with Wine, and empty themſelves of their Reaſons and Uunderſtandings, and knew withal that their Reckoning at laſt muſt be every Man's Blood, and the Shot muſt be paid with their Lives, would he not, think you, refrain from that Meeting, and be perſuaded not to be their Comrade for that time? And this very Perſon knows right well that Luxury and Drunkenneſs are awarded with no leſs than everlaſting Burnings, if the Writings of the Holy Apoſtles be Authentick, as certainly they are. What greater Frenzy then can Men labour under than to be guilty of the Commiſſion of Sin in ſuch Circumſtances, when they are convinc'd that they do amiſs, and know that they take the wrong way to Happineſs, and ſee beforehand the unavoidable Penalty of their Miſdoings?

Call ye not thoſe ſick or wounded Men *Mad* and *Frantick*, who throw away their Medicines, and ſpill their Potions, and pluck off their Plaiſters, and will ſubmit to no Means of Cure? The obſtinate Sinner does thus; though he be ſick almoſt to Death, and knows what will heal and recover him, yet he is averſe to all the Methods of Cure. The greater Need he hath of holy Advice, and fitting Applications, the ſtronger is his Refuſal of them, like the Perſon in a Swoon, who ſhuts his Teeth the harder againſt what is offer'd him, by how much the more he wants it. Hardned Sinners, after the Guiſe of *Mad Men*, rage when they are kindly uſed, and when their Friends attempt their Welfare. To cure them is to diſoblige them, and they are angry at you, and would deſtroy you becauſe you will not ſuffer them to do ſo to themſelves. They ſtorm at their Friends as that Frantick did, *Pol me occidiſtis amici, non ſervaſtis*, inſtead of conſulting my Safety you utterly ruine me. And if this doth not argue Diſtraction and Alienation of Mind, I know not what doth.

7. Is not he to be eſteemed a *Fool* or a *Mad Man* who glories in his Shame, and boaſts of that which is a real Diſgrace and Reproach to him? And yet ſuch is the Folly and Stupidity of Sinners, that they do ſo *. Boaſting at beſt is a loud Indication of Folly, but this is the groſſeſt ſort of Folly to brag of that which really debaſeth us, to be proud of that which renders us vile and abominable. He is a *Fool* indeed that *makes a Mock of Sin*. When the Man aſpires to that *Preferment* in Vice to *ſit in the Chair of the Scornful*, to laugh and ſcoff at Religion, and the hearty Profeſſors of it, when he is not content to be wicked, but he muſt even glory in it, when he is ſo far from bluſhing at his impious Deeds, that he openly proclaims and boaſts of them, when it is thus with him, the Caſe is deſperate, the Madneſs is grown to its height, and the Hoſpital of Incurables is the only Place for him. This is the Condition of a great Number of Men at this Day.

* Ἀν ἀλαζονῆς, τῦτ' ἀνοίας ἐςὶ φρύαγμα.

Laſtly, It is the utmoſt Degree of *Folly* and *Frenzy*, to be confident and ſecure in the midſt of the greateſt Dangers, and to be wholly unconcern'd in that Condition which is like to prove moſt perillous and deſtructive. This is the Caſe of refractory Sinners, and is as great a Teſtimony of *Folly* as can be produced. Hence perhaps the ſame † Hebrew Word ſignifies to *confide* and to *be a Fool*. There are two Sorts of Follies which the *Satyriſt* laſhes, and they are directly oppoſite to one another, for as he ſaith, it is the manner of *Fools*, while they are ſhunning one vicious Extreme to run into another which is contrary. The former of them is a needleſs Fear,

† כסל

> ——— *Eſt genus unum*
> *Stultitiæ, nihilum metuenda timentis.*

which in the Holy Stile is *a fearing where no Fear is*, that is, where there is no Reaſon or Ground of Fear. The latter Sort of Folly is

> ——— *Ignes*
> *Per medios fluvioſq; urentis.*

which is when a Man is deſperate and Fool-hardy, and ruſhes into the midſt of Flames, and runs into deep Rivers, or gallops down ſteep Hills and Precipices. And this is the Folly which is moſt obſervable in the Lives and Behaviour of Sinners: They expoſe themſelves to the greateſt Dangers imaginable, and yet are not in the leaſt concern'd at them. The old Generation of Sinners before the Flood ſet the firſt Example of this Kind; they indulged themſelves in their Pleaſures, they eat and drank freely, they married and were given in Marriage; they never liſtned to the Voice of God, or of their own Conſciences, they harkned not to *Noah* that Preacher of Righteouſneſs, nor to the Noiſe of the Hammers which were employ'd about making the Ark, and ſo the Flood broke in upon them and deſtroy'd them. Thus afterwards of the *Sodomites* our Saviour gives us this Account, that they did eat, they drank, they bought, they ſold, they planted, they builded, that is, they were ſunk too deep into their Pleaſures, and were too eager after their Buſineſs and Traffick, and by both were ſo employ'd, that *Deſtruction* was the leaſt Thing thought of; Fire and Brimſtone from above, Hell out of Heaven were never dreamt of. And thus do Sinners act at this very Day, inheriting the ſame Folly, perſiſting in the ſame Stupidity, and not minding the dreadful Judgments which threaten them, but they go on in their Sins, and care for none of theſe Things; they live as they liſt, they cheriſh themſelves in their Mirth and Jollity, and laugh at all ſober and virtuous Enterprizes. Thus *theſe Fools are known by their* uncomely *Laughter*. This (as well as the other Particulars I have offer'd to you) evinceth clearly that Sinners deſerve that Name; which was the Thing I undertook to prove.

And thus you have ſeen who are *Fools* in the Account of the God of Heaven, and of all wiſe Men. Let the Man be as Cunning and Politick as *Achitophel*, as Eloquent as *Tertullus*, as Learned as an *Athenian* Philoſopher, as Powerful as *Simon Magus*, yet if he employ his Wit, Eloquence, Learning and Power againſt his Maker, and in Defence of Error and Impiety, he is, according to the infallible Verdict of Sacred Scripture, no other than a Fool. And this, you may obſerve, is the repeated Phraſe and Idiom of the inſpired Writers. *Solomon*'s *Fool* is univerſally acknowledged to be a wicked and graceleſs Perſon. The Father of this wiſe Man, when he reflected on his Sin of numbring of the People, confeſſed it after this Faſhion, * *I have done exceeding fooliſhly.* And his Penitential Acknowledgments run after the ſame Manner upon another Occaſion, † *So fooliſh was I, and ignorant:* Yea, he adds, *I was as a Beaſt before thee*, as much as to ſay, the Practice of Vice ſo beſots a Man, that it degrades him below his Kind, it takes away the Manly and Generous Nature, and introduceth that which is Brutiſh and Senſual. But that is more than we need at preſent charge upon Sinners: The Accuſation now againſt them is *Folly*, which even the Language of God's Holy Book hath appropriated to them.

Achan, when he acted againſt the expreſs Command of Heaven, is ſaid to have ‡ *wrought Folly in Iſrael.* When *Saul* weary of ſtaying for *Samuel* uſurp'd the Prieſts Office and Employment, and in that abſolutely violated the Command of God, the holy Prophet reproved him after this Manner, *† *Thou haſt done fooliſhly, thou haſt not kept the Commandment of the Lord thy God:* As if he had ſaid, there can be no greater Inſtance of the Fooliſhneſs of any Man's Actions, than his breaking the Divine Commands, and thereby ſinning againſt God. *Tamar*, when her Brother *Ammon* would have forced her to Inceſt, labour'd to charm him with ſuch Language as this, ** *Nay my Brother, do not thou this Folly:* And preſently after; *As for thee, thou ſhalt be one of the Fools of Iſrael.* And indeed this Sin of *Uncleanneſs* is more ſignally known and expreſſed by the Name of *Folly* in the Holy Book, as might be ſhew'd if I had Time accordingly. *Fooliſh ſpeaking* is obſcene and lewd Diſcourſe, as appears by the Vices it is join'd with in *Eph.* 5. 4. The Source of all Irreligion and Prophaneneſs, namely Atheiſm, was voted of old to be no other than *Folly*; *the Fool hath ſaid in his Heart, there is no God*, whereas now it is the Badge of a *Modern Wit* not only to ſay this in his Heart, but to proclaim it aloud to the World. When *Job*'s Wife bad him *curſe God, and die*, which was all one as to turn Atheiſt, he told her plainly that *ſhe ſpake like one of the fooliſh Women.* Indeed an Atheiſt is an half-witted Perſon; that is the beſt that can be ſaid of him. He is one that hath not taken Notice of Things in the World, nor look'd Abroad, nor ſeen the Graſs grow, for every Spire of it points at Heaven, and directs us to the Almighty Creator of the World. There are other Inſtances of this Way of ſpeaking, as in *Prov.* 14. 17. *He that is ſoon angry dealeth fooliſhly*; and in *Eccl.* 7. 9. *Anger reſteth in the Boſom of Fools.*

It were eaſy to ſhew you that in the New Teſtament likewiſe this Propriety of Speech is kept up. Our Saviour more than once calls the Phariſees *Fools.* †† *Fooliſh Luſts* the Apoſtle calls the Deſires and Inclinations of wicked Men, who would not ruſh ſo boldly into Sin and Danger if they had not forfeited their Reaſons, baffled their Intellectuals, and given themſelves up to Sottiſhneſs and Stupidity. And it cannot eſcape your Obſervation, that the Prodigal Son, when he left his former Vanities and Vices, is ſaid to *come to himſelf:* As much as to ſay, he was before a diſtracted Perſon, and beſides himſelf. As long as a Man continues in his Sins he hath not the Uſe of his Reaſon, his Brain is ſhatter'd, he hath no more Underſtanding than a *Fool.*

And this is agreeable not only to the Stile of Holy Writ, and the Phraſeology of inſpired Men, but it was the Language of the *Hebrew* Doctors generally; Therefore they ſay, †* no Man commits any Sin unleſs the Spirit of Folly enter into him. And this was the received Notion of all the old *Philoſophers*, eſpecially the *Stoicks*, as you have an Evidence of it in *Tully*'s *Paradoxes*, where the *good* and *the wiſe*

* 2 Sam. 24. 10.

† Pſal. 73. 22.

‡ Joſ. 7. 15.

*† 1 Sam. 13. 13.

** Judg. 19. 23.

†† 1 Tim. 6. 9.

†* Non committit homo tranſgreſſionem niſi ingreſſus fuerit in eum רוּחַ שְׁטוּת; ſpiritus ſtultitiæ. *Sota.*

man are reciprocal, and the *Vicious* and the *Fool* are made one and the ſame. Which is implied in that celebrated Saying of theirs, that all wiſe Men are free, but all Fools are Slaves; where by *wiſe Men*, they underſtand the *good* and *virtuous*, and by *Fools* the *wicked*. They proceed yet further, and offer this as a juſtifiable Paradox, that * all Fools (and ſuch are all Men addicted to Vice) are ſtark mad, and are run out of their Wits. The Meaning is, they act againſt Reaſon and common Senſe, they are raſh and abſurd, careleſs and improvident, they have no Forecaſt, they do all Things prepoſterouſly, they often act in oppoſition to their own Sentiments as well as againſt Reaſon: They proceed upon falſe and unſound Propoſitions, though they know them to be ſuch. Whatever they ſay and plead for themſelves is perfect Non-ſenſe, their Excuſes are idle and trivial, weak and incoherent, and a Child may anſwer them. They reſolve to be cheated and abuſed, they purpoſely blind and hoodwink their Minds, and wilfully throw themſelves away. This ſhews them to be *Fools* and *diſtracted* Perſons. *Hierocles* harps upon this Notion, and tells us that he that † hath departed from God (which can only be by willful Sin) hath at the ſame time abandoned his Underſtanding; he that hath left God and Goodneſs is void of Knowledge and Reaſon. That is true which *Cebes* very wittily repreſents in his *Table*, that all Men who come into the World drink of the Cup of Error, Folly and Impoſture, but ſome more, and ſome leſs; ſome take down larger Draughts, and ſtagger more ſhamefully than others. Theſe are the Perſons whoſe extreme *Folly* I have ſet before you in this Diſcourſe: They have all along acted like Fools and Men bereft of their Reaſon, and ſtill they continue in their unreaſonable Courſes, and will not be prevail'd with to diſgorge their Potion, and to relinquiſh their Errors and Deluſions. In ſhort, they love their Sins, and perſevere in the Practice of them, and conſequently reſolve to hug their Folly, and to continue Fools as long as they live.

To make ſome *Reflections* on what hath been ſaid,

1. We cannot but take Notice of the bold and impudent Behaviour of thoſe *Fools* whom I have been ſpeaking of. Notwithſtanding they are of that Character which I preſented to you, and therefore deſervedly are the moſt *contemptible* Creatures upon Earth, yet they have a high Eſteem of themſelves, and boaſt of their Doings, and proclaim themſelves Maſters of Prudence and Wiſdom. You ſee natural Fools and Madmen are ſtared and hooted at whereſoever they go; every one laughs at their ridiculous Looks, Words and Geſtures. And juſt ſo would it be with *wicked Men*, but that their Numbers are too great, and their Party too ſtrong. The Behaviour of theſe Perſons is not leſs ſtrange and uncouth than that of the other: They are obſerv'd to deport themſelves as vainly and ridiculouſly: They do nothing at all that is decorous and handſome, they are every whit as wild and extravagant, and might equally be entertain'd with Scorn, and made the Objects of Deriſion. But they patronize one anothers Miſcarriages, and vouch all their Actions to be laudable. Nay, ſee the prodigious Impudence of of theſe Men! Becauſe they are counted *Fools* by all *wiſe* and *virtuous* Perſons, therefore out of Revenge, and to be even with them, they vote *them* to be *Fools* and *Mad men*. Thus we read that ** *Elijah* was call'd a *Mad Fellow*, and the ſame Language was uſed to †† *Jeremiah* by the falſe Prophet *Shemajah*. Some ſaid the ſame of our *† bleſſed Lord and Saviour; and no leſs than *Madneſs* was imputed to St. *Paul* by *Feſtus*: And *Origen* †* was reviled after the ſame manner by *Celſus*. The beſt and holieſt Men have met with this Uſage from the Wicked: Theſe will allow them to have no Share of Underſtanding, they cry them all down as crazed and diſtracted Creatures. When they meet with any Man of a ſtrict and ſevere Life, they preſently conclude that too much Religion hath made him mad. And if they may be Judges, the boldeſt Blaſphemy (and this is no other which they are guilty of) ſhall paſs for Wit, and Irreligion and Atheiſm ſhall be applauded as Wiſdom.

2dly. Notwithſtanding this Impudence of theirs, let us throughly believe and be perſuaded of the Truth of what I have been inſiſting on. That Queſtion of the *Pſalmiſt* is a poſitive and plain Deciſion of the preſent Caſe, *Are they not all without Underſtanding that work Wickedneſs?* Yes moſt certainly they are. As many wicked Men as you ſee, ſo many are there void of Underſtanding. Though this be doubted of, nay flatly denied by the greateſt part of the World now, yet the Day will come when all Judgments ſhall be rectified, and right Apprehenſions of Things ſhall take place. Then it ſhall be acknowledged that Irreligion is *Folly*, and that Godlineſs is the greateſt *Wiſdom*. This ſhall be a Confeſſion extorted from the Mouths of the moſt profli-

* Ὅτι πάντες οἱ μωροὶ μαίνονται. Laert. in Zenone.

† Τὸν γὰρ ἀνόητον ἀνάγκη καὶ ἄθεον εἶναι, καὶ τὸν ἄθεον ἀνόητον, &c.

** 2 Kings 9. 11.

†† Jer. 29. 26.

*† Joh. 10. 10.

†* Cont. Celſ. *l*. 4.

gate Wretches, *who then repenting and groaning for Anguiſh of Spirit, ſhall ſay within themſelves, This is he whom we had ſometime in Deriſion, and a Proverb of Reproach. We Fools accounted his Life Madneſs, and his End to be without Honour. How is he numbred* (now) *among the Children of God, and his Lot is among the Saints? Therefore have we erred from the Way of Truth,* (as the Apocryphal Writer excellently repreſents thoſe Perſons ſpeaking). This will be the Language of Sinners another Day, either that of Death or Judgment, and it may be both. For let me tell you, unleſs you be ſtrangely hardned and ſtupified when you come to die, Sin will then be acknowledged to be the greateſt *Folly*. Then you will lament and bemoan yourſelves that you neglected your Duty, that you forgot the Deſign of your coming into the World; then you will wiſh that you had begun betimes to mind your higheſt Intereſt, that you had ſpent your youthful and vigorous Years in the Service of God. Then Religion and a good Conſcience will not ſeem to be idle and empty Words, then Piety and Virtue will appear to be the greateſt Realities, and a holy Life the only Wiſdom, and Sinners the greateſt *Fools*. Thus it will be; and if Sin be a Folly *at Death*, it is without Doubt the ſame in *Health* and *Youth*. Be perſuaded therefore of this *now*, that you may not be convinced of it to your unſpeakable Confuſion at the laſt and terrible Day, when all vicious and unrighteous Souls ſhall unanimouſly condemn themſelves, and confeſs their Folly: yea, when both Heaven and Hell ſhall ring aloud with this joint Acknowledgment, that wicked Men are Fools, and that the Godly are the only Wiſe Men.

3dly. and laſtly then, Though *Folly* be ſo rampant every where, yet do you reſolve to be truly *wiſe, i. e.* to forſake your Sins and to lead a holy Life. Weigh well the ſeveral Particulars which I have inſiſted on, and ſee how naturally they inforce upon you the Neceſſity of Repentance and Amendment of Life, unleſs you can think it reaſonable always to play the Fool, to act contrary to Principles of right Reaſon, to live all your Days in a palpable Miſtake, to foſter Dotage, and to talk and act wildly. It is obſerved by *Arrianus*, that no Man will confeſs that * he is a *Madman* or a *Fool*, but you may hear them all ſay the contrary: For the Title of a *Fool* being ſo infamous, Men labour by all Means to avoid the Imputation of it: They cannot brook this ſcandalous Name, and therefore they will not be brought to own their Folly. But I aſſure you of this, it is the firſt Step to *Wiſdom* to do ſo; therefore be not unwilling to *begin* to be wiſe by being ſenſible of your Folly. Then proceed to caſt off Sin, and to practiſe Holineſs, which is *compleating* your Wiſdom. I appeal to you as you are *Men* and *Chriſtians*, whether this be not true. As you are indued with rational Faculties, and moreover as you have the Conduct of Evangelical Faith and Divine Revelation, you are under an Obligation of quitting your Sins and leading a godly Life: for according to the Deciſion of right Reaſon and of Holy Scripture, this is the only Wiſdom. You will find that in the Chriſtian Life, and the conſtant Obſervance of it there is nothing but what is worthy of a Man, and agreeable to his rational Nature, and that all the Laws and Rules of Chriſtianity are founded on the Principles of Wiſdom and Prudence. Go then, ſtudy and practiſe this Divine Life; denying all Ungodlineſs, and worldly Luſts, ſee that you live ſoberly, righteouſly and godlily in this preſent evil World; faithfully adhere to the Laws of Chriſt Jeſus, and obey his Commands: Diſcharge your whole Duty with Sincerity, and make it your grand Buſineſs and Deſign to gloriſy God, and to ſave your Immortal Souls. This is true *Wiſdom*, and the contrary is downright *Folly*.

* Ὅτι ἄφρων ἐστὶν ἢ ἀνόητος. In Epictet.

THE
JOY
Which attends
GODLINESS.

Psalm XCVII. 11.

Light is ſown for the Righteous, and Gladneſs for the Upright in Heart.

THERE are three main Things conſiderable in our Religion: *Firſt*, Good and Sound Principles, Excellent and Uſeful Propoſitions to guide our Lives by: And then a Holy and Blameleſs Life, according to thoſe Principles: And *Laſtly*, Joy and Comfort reſulting from both: It is this triple Excellency which hugely commends Chriſtianity, and renders the Lives of holy Perſons lovely and graceful. Good Principles are the Baſis and Foundation: A holy Life is the Superſtructure: And Joy and Gladneſs are the Battlements and higheſt Pinnacles of it, which approach ſo near to the State of Heaven and Happineſs. *The Kingdom of God*, ſaith the Great Apoſtle, *is Righteouſneſs, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, Rom. xiv. 17. If Righteouſneſs were not attended with Joy, if Virtue did not reward us with Pleaſure and Delight, they would not be what really they are, *viz*, the

Beginning and Eſſay of our future Bleſſedneſs in another World, where there ſhall be Fullneſs of Joy and Pleaſures for evermore. This Life being a Shadow at leaſt of that which is to come, and Grace being the Inchoation of Glory, the holy *Pſalmiſt* acquaints us here, that we ſhall, even in this Valley of Tears, in this Scene of Troubles and Sorrows, have ſome Prelibations and Fore-taſts of the heavenly Pleaſures, of the redundant Light, and ſurpaſſing Joys of Saints and Angels. *Light is ſown for the Righteous, and Gladneſs for the Upright in Heart.*

In which Words are obſervable theſe three Things:

I. A great Bleſſing or Privilege, expreſs'd by thoſe two Words *Light* and *Gladneſs*, which are ſynonymous Terms, and denote to us one and the ſame Thing. It is the *Oyl of Gladneſs* (to ſpeak in the Holy Stile) which feeds and maintains this *Light*. And I find that in the three Learned Languages *Light* and *Gladneſs* are expreſſive one of another. And there is good Reaſon for it, for the Sun is a joyful Spectacle, and its Light doth naturally create Cheerfulneſs and Gladneſs. Whence it was that the Feaſt which *Judas Maccabeus* inſtituted on Occaſion of the Reſtauration of the Temple, and ſolemn dedicating it, after it had been prophan'd by *Antiochus*, was called the *Feaſt of Lights*, as *Joſephus* in his *Antiquities* informs us, becauſe then *Joy* and *Gladneſs* began to ſhine forth anew.

II. Here are obſervable the *Perſons* to whom this great Bleſſing belongs, the *Righteous* and *Upright in Heart*. And here likewiſe one Word expounds the other, and is a Paraphraſe upon it. For both theſe expreſs the true Nature and Quality of ſanctified Perſons, and ſuch who are the Children of God, and Heirs of eternal Life. *Righteouſneſs* denotes the outward and viſible Part of Holineſs: But that is mean and inſignificant, unleſs Sincerity and *Uprightneſs of Heart* be added to it. And ſo again, an inward Affection to Goodneſs, without the external Works of Righteouſneſs, and the apparent Practice of Holineſs may be juſtly counted but a Pretence and Deluſion. But thoſe who are careful not to ſeparate Righteouſneſs and Uprightneſs of Heart, are truly religious; and thoſe are the Perſons in the Text who have a Right to *Joy* and *Gladneſs*.

III. Here is intimated the *Manner* how theſe Perſons partake of this Bleſſing and Privlege, *Light is ſown for them*. This Light is often hid by a Cloud of Tears, and Sorrow: This precious Seed is cover'd with Clodds, and lodg'd under Ground for a time, but it lives and ſprouts, it grows and ſpreads, and you ſhall ſee it e'er long exalt its joyful Head, and a welcome Harveſt will give you Joy of its wonderful Increaſe. *They that ſow in Tears ſhall reap in Joy.* And the ſame devout Prince in another of his *Pſalms*, Pſ. cxii. 4. aſſures us, *That unto the Upright there ariſeth Light out of Darkneſs.* A Cloud is able to intercept the Sun, and hide it from our Sight, but it cannot blot it out of its Orb, or rob it of its Luſtre and Brightneſs. The virtuous Man's Joy, though it be interrupted by the Miſeries and ſad Accidents of this World, yet it is not extinguiſhed, but oftentimes encreas'd by them. His preſent Reſt and Happineſs are unſpeakably inhanſed by his former Pains and Adventures. And even when he is invironed with the greateſt Diſaſters, he experienceth the happy Tranſports and Raviſhments of a good Conſcience, he feels the gracious Impreſſions of the Divine Favour on his Soul, he finds the Senſe of the other and a better Life warm upon his Mind, he rejoyceth in the ſincere Diſcharge of his Duty, and in Reflections on the Integrity of his Life, by which he lays the Foundation of everlaſting Joy and Felicity.

The *Remark* then that I make, and the *Propoſition* which I will inſiſt upon is this, that good and righteous Men, and they only are the Poſſeſſors of true Joy and ſolid Mirth. Here I will 1. Prove the Propoſition. 2. I will ſhew you what are the excellent *Properties* of the righteous Man's Joy. 3. I will anſwer ſome Objections which are made againſt this Joy. 4. I will preſent you with thoſe neceſſary Inferences which are to be made from the whole.

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They, all of them deſerve a particular Diſcourſe, but I will enlarge only upon one or two of them, which are the Foundation of all the reſt, and in a manner comprehend them all. Such is the *gracious Pardon of our Sins for Chriſt's Sake*. There is no Joy ſo great as that which ariſeth from the Senſe of this ineſtimable Benefit. There is no Joy comparable to that which flows from our Belief of God's beſtowing this one Favour upon us. That Jeſus Chriſt hath ſatisfied for us, and reconciled us unto God by his Death, and thereby removed the Guilt of our Sins for ever, is Matter of the higheſt Exultation imaginable. If any Soul can hear God ſpeaking unto it, as our Saviour once to the Man ſick of the Palſy, *Mat.* ix. 2. *Be of good cheer, thy Sins are forgiven thee*, he may then be cheerful indeed, he may ſing and ſhout for Joy. You may obſerve therefore that in the 32d *Pſalm*, after the Doctrine of *Forgiveneſs of Sins*, there follows as it were naturally and methodically *Rejoycing and Giving of Thanks*. The *Pſalm* begins thus, [*Bleſſed is he whoſe Tranſgreſſion is forgiven, whoſe Sin is covered. Bleſſed is the Man unto whom the Lord imputeth not Iniquity.*] And thus it ends, [*Be glad in the Lord and rejoyce ye Righteous: And ſhout for Joy all ye that are upright in Heart.*] Joy and Gladneſs may well be the *Concluſion*, where Pardon of Sins was the *Premiſes*. It is certain that the Senſe of the Remiſſion of Sins in Chriſt's Blood adminiſters a moſt raviſhing Pleaſure, and ſuch as it is impoſſible to expreſs. This is the Joy of *Jubilee*, for now the Bond-ſlaves are ſet at Liberty; this is the Joy of *Harveſt*, for now the Soul reaps the Fruit of all its Hopes, Wiſhes, Prayers and Endeavours; and of all the Undertakings of the bleſſed Jeſus for loſt Man. This is the Joy of the *Returned Prodigal*, who rejoyceth that his angry and incenſed Father, ſpeaks kindly to him, and receiveth him into his Embraces. This is the Joy of the *Abſolved Criminal*, who is unſpeakably glad, that the ſevere Judge is now reconciled to him, and pleads for him, yea acquits him, inſtead of paſſing Sentence againſt him. It was the inward Senſe of this high Favour which filled the Heart of the Virgin *Mary*, when ſhe profeſs'd that *her Spirit rejoyced in*

God her Saviour, and this is the Ground of ſolid Joy and Triumph in all the Servants of God through all Ages of the World.

Moreover, they find an Exuberancy of Joy adminiſtred to them from the Conſideration of all the *Offices* and *Undertakings* of Chriſt Jeſus. They have Cauſe to exult with the utmoſt Emotions of Gladneſs, that Chriſt is *King* and *Sovereign*, and takes on him the Government of his Church, which cannot but be infinitely advantageous to his Servants and Followers. They rejoice alſo in his *Prieſtly Office*, whereby they are aſcertain'd of the Sufficiency and Acceptation of that Sacrifice which was offer'd for their Sins. And they are comfortably aſſur'd by his *Prophetick* Function, that they ſhall not be deſtitute of an infallible Teacher, but ſhall be fully inſtructed in all the neceſſary Matters of Religion, and ſuch as concern the eternal Welfare of their Souls. They rejoice in the bleſſed *Nativity* and *Incarnation* of the Meſſias, the moſt joyful Tidings that ever arrived at mortal Ears, according to that of the holy Angel, the welcome Meſſenger of this News, *Behold! I bring you good Tidings of great Joy which ſhall be to all People, for unto you is born this Day a Saviour.* They rejoice in the *meritorious Death* and *Paſſion* of the Lord Jeſus, whereby Death is conquer'd, and Hell itſelf baffled. They are tranſported with Gladneſs for his miraculous *Reſurrection*, which (beyond all the Arguments and Demonſtrations of Philoſophy) gives us an Aſſurance of *Immortality* and Eternal Life. With good Reaſon therefore the holy Women that went on Pilgrimage to our Saviour's Sepulchre, to ſee whether their Lord was riſen from the Dead, and were told by an Angel that he *was*; departed with *great Joy* and ran to bring his Diſciples word, (as the Evangeliſt St. *Matthew* acquaints us in his Goſpel). The *Aſcenſion* likewiſe of the Crucified Redeemer may exalt our Minds to the higheſt Pitch of *Rejoycing*, and carry them up *with* him, to the undiſturbed Regions of *Gladneſs*. St. *Luke* therefore tells us in the Cloſe of his laſt Chapter, that the Diſciples (as ſoon as they ſaw their bleſſed Maſter parted from them and carried up into Heaven) returned to *Jeruſalem* with *great Joy, praiſing and bleſſing God.* Laſtly, his *Interceſſion* adminiſters *extraordinary Joy* and Comfort to pious Souls; their High-Prieſt is now at the right Hand of the Father, offering their Prayers and Petitions to him; and what they faithfully and ſincerely aſk at the Throne of Grace, ſhall without Doubt be granted for the ſake of ſo powerful an Interceſſor.

To what hath been ſaid, I might alſo adjoin all the *Holy Ordinances* and *Divine Inſtitutions* in the Church of *Chriſt*, and ſhew you how wonderfully ſubſervient they are to the Spiritual *Joy* of every good Chriſtian, and how they are proper Means to convey it to him. But of theſe I will ſpeak in the Cloſe of my next Diſcourſe, when I ſhall have Occaſion to ſhew you how you may promote and further this Evangelical Gladneſs and Rejoycing. Thus I have let you ſee that the *Spiritual Priviledges* of a Chriſtian adminiſter Joy; yea, all Things in Chriſtianity advance it; The *Goſpel* (according to the true Import of it) ſpeaks nothing but good News and glad Tidings.

I muſt add in the next Place, that not only *Spiritual*, but *Temporal* and *Earthly* Things are real Matter of Rejoycing to a righteous Man. Whether he eats or drinks, or whatever he doth hath not only a Tendency to God's Glory, but his own Comfort and Contentment. He, like thoſe good Saints in the Apoſtles Days, *eats his Meat with Gladneſs.* A free and plentiful Uſe of all the Creatures is indulged to him by his Creator, and he enjoys them with a merry Heart, for it was the Intent and Purpoſe of Heaven that he ſhould do ſo, that he ſhould freely and cheerfully uſe the good Things that were vouchſafed unto him by Divine Providence, and that he ſhould fit himſelf by them for the Service of his Maker. A righteous Man hath the Fruition of all innocent and natural Pleaſures; and indeed if they be not ſuch, *i. e.* natural and harmleſs, they are not Pleaſures, it is improper and abſurd to faſten that Name upon them. Therefore the Pleaſures of vicious Men, are improperly call'd ſo; the Delight which they take in Covetouſneſs, unlawful Gain, Oppreſſion, or in Riot and Luxury is a falſe and counterfeit Delight; eſpecially theſe latter are no real Pleaſures though they commonly paſs for ſuch. The Intemperate and Luxurious are ſtifled with their own Exceſs, and are drowned and choaked in their own Blood. But Temperance and Sobriety are the greateſt Epicuriſm, and the higheſt Exaltation of all bodily Pleaſures, let the depraved ſort of Mankind ſay what they will. A virtuous and godly Man hath his Pleaſures refined and purified, ſtrain'd from the Filth and Feculency which adhere to the Delights of the Wicked and Debauched, and ſo he finds a greater Guſt and Reliſh in them.

Nay, to proceed higher, thoſe Things which ſeem in themſelves to be moſt *unpleaſant* and *grievous* are not ſo to a righteous Perſon. He *rejoyceth* even in Calamities, Sufferings, Perſecutions; He, with the Apoſtle, * is *filled with Comfort, and is exceeding joyful in all*

his

* 2 Cor. 7.4.

his Tribulation. And following the Example of all the Apoſtles, he * *rejoyceth that he is counted worthy to ſuffer Shame for Chriſt's Name.* He hath actual Experience of the Truth of St. *Paul*'s Words in 2 *Cor.* 1. 5. *As the Sufferings of Chriſt abound in us, ſo our Conſolation alſo aboundeth by Chriſt.* He hath learnt that Exhortation of St. *James*, † *My Brethren, count it all Joy when ye fall into divers Temptations*, that is, into divers Afflictions and Diſtreſſes. Theſe are made the real Inſtruments of Comfort and Joy to him, whilſt they find the Perverſeneſs of their Nature and the Naughtineſs of their Lives moſt ſenſibly check'd and amended hereby, and whilſt they now have a more ſignal Experiment of the Aſſiſtance which God giveth them, whereby they are upheld in their greateſt Troubles and Streights, and are extraordinarily refreſhed by the Spirit of Grace, and ſtrengthened againſt all the Suggeſtions and Temptations of Satan. As Phyſicians miniſter the moſt Chearing and Sovereign Cordials, when they ſee their Patients labouring under the greateſt Defections. Thus which Way ſoever a Chriſtian looks, he meets with abundant Arguments of *Joy* and *Gladneſs*.

II. I am to diſplay before you the *excellent Properties* of the righteous Man's Joy. It is not like that of the World, vain and frivolous, empty and inſignificant. But that true Joy which is to be found only in the Ways of Righteouſneſs is to be known by ſuch admirable Qualities as theſe,

1. It is vaſt and ample, whether you conſider its Object, which is infinite, and therefore the moſt comprehenſive; whereas the Pleaſures and Delights of Senſe are ſhort and ſhallow, narrow and contracted, their *Objects* being of that *Nature*. The *Purer* and more *Spiritual Pleaſures* muſt needs be *boundleſs* and unlimited, becauſe thoſe *excellent Things* which they are converſant about are no leſs than God, and Heaven, and an eternal Kingdom fraught with innumerable and endleſs Glories. Or again, whether you conſider the *Subject* of this Spiritual Gladneſs, it will be found to be very extenſive and capacious, and of a quicker Senſe than the *lower Faculties*, wherein *Senſual Delight* is lodg'd. Hence it is, That the *Torments* of Devils, and the *Joys* of Angels and Saints are *far greater* than the *Pains* and *Pleaſures* of Beaſts or brutiſh Men. And as the *Regrets* of an *evil Conſcience* exceed all *other Torments*, ſo the *Peace* and *Tranquillity* of a *good one* ſurpaſſes all the moſt exquiſite *Delights* of Body and Senſe.

2. The Joy of righteous Perſons is not precarious or dependent upon Things that are without them, which is another Conſideration that mightily inhanſeth it. Joy bearing ſo cloſe upon the Will, which is a free Faculty, muſt needs be impregnable, and not be beholding to the World or any Thing in it. It is in a Man's own Diſpoſal, and hangs upon no other Man's Will and Pleaſure. † A wiſe Man, ſaith *Seneca*, (and ſuch only is the vertuous Perſon) is poſſeſſed of a Joy that is the greateſt, and is uninterrupted, and is his own. Which laſt Quality of it ſpeaks it to be of a peculiar and tranſcendent Nature, *viz.* that as to the main it is independent on all Things without him, and doth not in the leaſt owe its Subſiſtance to them. The Drunkard's Joy depends upon repeated Cups and merry Meetings: The Joy of the Covetous Man is confin'd to his Wealth, and is ſhut up in his Coffers. The Joy of the Ambitious is of no higher a Flight than the Honours and Dignities of the World. The flaming Joys of Laſcivious Hearts are ſoon ſtifled and extinguiſhed if you abſtract the Fuel which is proper to thoſe impure Burnings. In a Word, all Corporeal and Senſual Pleaſures depend upon ſuch Objects as are alterable, and by ſeveral Accidents may be taken away, and therefore the Joy depending upon them muſt needs be flitting and inconſtant.

3. The Joy of righteous Men, though it be inward and retired, yet is it alſo viſible and opperative. This Oil of Gladneſs is ſeen ſometimes to overflow the Veſſel, and cannot be ſhut up and confin'd. *Who can carry Coals in his Boſom,* (ſaith the wiſe Man) *and not be burnt*? Who can lodge in his Heart an entire Love and Complacency in God and Goodneſs, who can nouriſh that Holy Fire there, and not diſcover it unto others by ſome Eruptions and Flaſhes of Joy? This is a buſy Paſſion, and will not be kept within Bounds, it riſes higher and higher, and ends in Holy Tranſports and Extaſies. Neither are theſe any Ways hurtful to the Soul; for though we read that ſome have died with the immoderate Sallies of Senſual Joy, yet it is far otherwiſe with that which is Spiritual, which, the greater it grows, is the more ſafe. Nor is the Tranſcendency of Pleaſure damped by any ſubſequent Decays and Deliquiums of Soul. Which reminds me of the next Property of the Holy Man's Mirth.

4. It is conſtant and durable, perpetual and inexhauſtible. ‡ *They* (i e. the righteous) ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *ſhall be abundantly ſatiſfied with the Fulneſs of thy Houſe, and thou ſhalt*

* 2 Cor. vii. 4.

† Jam. 1. 2.

† Sapiens lætitiâ fruitur maximâ, continuâ, ſuâ.

‡ Pſal. 36. 8, 9.

make them drink of the River of thy Pleaſures, for with thee is the Fountain of Life, and are thy right Hand there are Pleaſures for evermore. They are at the Fountain; a continual Spring feeds and ſupplies their Joy, ſo that it cannot be dried up. This Spring is the Kindneſs and Favour of the God of Heaven, the free Bounty and Goodneſs of that great Benefactor whoſe Gifts and Graces are without Repentance, who perſeveres in his *Love*, if we do ſo in our Duty, whoſe Promiſes are all Yea and Amen, and whoſe Faithfulneſs is as immutable as himſelf. Hence is it that the *Comforts* of good Men cannot be born down by the greateſt and heavieſt Preſſures, the moſt urgent Miſeries and Calamities; hence is it that they are not out-dared by *Death*, nor do they expire when they are *breathing their laſt*. This was it which our Saviour, when he was taking his Farewel of his Followers, left with them, to ſolace and refreſh them, *Your Hearts ſhall rejoyce* (ſaith he) *and your Joy no Man taketh from you*, John 16. 22. The Pleaſures of Sin and Folly are but for a Seaſon, they are ſhort and fading, they laſt but the reckoning of a few Pulſes. Nay, we are told that the *Joy of the Hypocrite is but for a Moment*, Job 20. 5. And it is deſervedly compared to *the crackling of Thorns under a Pot*, Eccl. 7. 6.

* Virgil.

* —— *magno veluti cum flamma ſonore*
Virgea ſuggeritur coſtis undantis aheni.

A fit Reſemblance of the fading Joys of Sinners, which are loud and clamorous, but are quickly paſt, they yield a ſhort Blaze, and ſo go out; and it were well if there were not *Death in the Pot*, if thoſe ſhort Pleaſures did not end in eternal Death and Deſtruction. But this Complaint cannot be made againſt the Joys and Pleaſures which righteous Men feel, they are durable and laſting, and they have no ſad Cloſe to diſcommend them. But,

III. It will be *objected* that in the Obſervation and Experience of the World Things are far *different* from what I have repreſented them: And nothing is more ordinary and obvious than this, that the beſt Men are *Sad* and *Sorrowful*, and ſpend their Days in penſive Thoughts and penitential Tears: They mortify their Bodies and chaſtiſe their Souls, and diſcover little of *Joy* all their Lives long.

I anſwer 1. It is true, righteous Men retain a deep Sorrow and Regret upon their Minds for their Sins, but even this is pleaſant to them, it being their Duty, and urged upon them by the Command of Heaven. Even the Auſterities and Mortifications which holy Men exerciſe are productive of the higheſt Solace and Rejoycing. The Tears and Sighs, the ſorrowful Complaints and penitential Confeſſions of Converts are more ſweet than the Joys and Exultations of Theatres, and the moſt celebrated Expreſſions of ſenſual Mirth and Jollity. For it muſt needs be *comfortable* to the pious Soul, that God hath accepted its Tears and Groans, that its ardent Prayers and Addreſſes are receiv'd, and that this ſhort and Temporal Grief prevents the Eternal Sorrows of Hell.

2. I anſwer that the Joys of devout and holy Men being not the ſame with thoſe of the corrupted World, there may thence ariſe a Miſtake, and it may be thought by ſome, that good Men are ſad heavy, when indeed they are nothing ſo For I do not mean by this *Gladneſs* any ſuch thing as the Jollity and Laughter of the World. No, the Spiritual Mirth is not any ſuch light and ſuperficial Thing. This, though it makes a Noiſe, and is very loud and profuſe, yet it is a very mean degree of Joy. Take this for a Maxim, We never laugh when our Joy is great and well grounded. A Jeſt or a ridiculous Accident will raiſe Laughter ſooner than the joyfulleſt Tidings that can be brought us. But the Joy which I have been ſpeaking of is more inward than outward, and yet (as I ſhew'd you) it diſcovers itſelf alſo by viſible Effects. It hath a ſure Baſis, a laſting Foundation, a never-failing Spring, and it can no more be exhauſted than the Original and Source of it, and that is the Favour of God. Every faithful Follower of Chriſt, like his Maſter, *hath Meat to eat which the World knows not of*, he hath Pleaſures and Delights which they are unacquainted with. It is promiſ'd to the Chriſtian Champion that fights the good Fight of Faith, and overcomes the World, that he ſhall *eat of the hidden Manna*, the Delicacies of which are wholly conceal'd from vulgar Palates, *Rev* 1. 7. A good Conſcience is *a continual Feaſt* ! But how few underſtand the Sweetneſs of this choice Fare? *A Stranger doth not intermeddle with this Joy*. The Delights of virtuous Living are ſomething Serene and Solid, and not after the ordinary Rate of bodily Pleaſures; and therefore 'tis no Wonder that the groſs Palates of vicious Men cannot reliſh them. The Joy of the Holy Ghoſt and the Tranſports of Godly Minds, are not any mean and vile thing, ſuch as the vain Laughter and Mirth of the World is; and the depraved Minds of Men cannot frame any

other Notion of *Joy* but this The Rejoycing of good and holy Men is not ſo loud, and makes not ſo great a Shew as that of the World, but believe it for a certain Truth that it is far greater than any worldly Joy. So the inſpired Prophet and Pſalmiſt acquaints us, *Pſal.* 4. 7. *Thou haſt put Gladneſs into my Heart more than in the Time that their Corn and Wine encreaſed.* But wicked and carnal Perſons are wholly unacquainted with this Divine and Spiritual Joy, and therefore they are not competent Judges of it. They cannot reach it with their Thoughts, becauſe they never knew any thing of it. Wherefore let theſe Men *object* what they pleaſe, we know they are not to be liſten'd to, for they have no Skill or Judgment in the Matter they talk of.

But if the *Objection* ſhould be ſtarted afreſh, or rather caſt into a new Shape, and it ſhould be urged againſt what we have diſcours'd, that *Gladneſs* is not the proper Allotment and peculiar Bleſſing of the Righteous; for 'tis obſerv'd that *wicked* and *prophane Livers* are the cheerfulleſt ſort of People in the World, the worſt and vileſt Sinners are the merrieſt and moſt jocund; In brief, though my Text ſeems to confine Gladneſs to the *Righteous* only, yet it is plain that it is common to the ungodly, who (we ſee) freely indulge their eaſy Laugh, and look very pleaſantly, and are Maſters of the profuſeſt Mirth: I reply to this

1. That a merry Countenance is not always the Sign of a merry Heart, and though theſe Mens outward Mien and Aſpect be gay, yet at the ſame Time the inward Receſſes of their Souls may be very black and ghaſtly. * Do you reckon him a joyful Man who laughs? It is chiefly requiſite that the Mind be cheery and pleaſant, ſaith the excellent Moraliſt. If you had (as *Momus* wiſhed) a Window ſtruck out in the Breaſts of the Wicked and Prophane, you might ſee, and at the ſame Time wonder at the black Thoughts which moleſt their Minds, the diſmal Apprehenſions which they form, the melancholick Reflections which they make. A ſilent Wound is nouriſh'd in their Breaſts, and yet a Wound that hath a Mouth wide enough to devour them.

* Tu illum judicas gaudere qui ridet? Animus debet eſſe alacer. *Sen.*

——*Ilia ſubter*
Cœcum vulnus habet, ſed lato balteus auro
Protegit.——

The embroider'd Belt goes acroſs, and palliates the Wound; but when it is not ſeen it is felt, and all the Mirth they make ſemblance of cannot diſguiſe it.

2. There is a vaſt Difference between the *Joy* (ſuch as it is) of a vicious Man and of one that is good and virtuous. The former is the Product of Ignorance and Stupidity, of being inſenſible of Sin and Danger. Wicked Men are not apprehenſive of the miſerable State they are in, and thence 'tis that they put on a Face of Mirth. Beſides, their Joy is upheld by Diverſion and Company, by Pleaſure and Paſtime, otherwiſe it would flag and dwindle. But a godly Man's Joy is grounded on a ſolid Foundation, namely, the unchangeable Love of God, and the Merits of Chriſt, and the real Satisfaction that is in Religion, and the Solaces of a good Conſcience. *Being juſtified by Faith, he hath Peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Let not ungodly Men then mention their Gladneſs, for we ſee it hath no Affinity at all with that of the Righteous and Holy.

3. I reply, that the Joys of wicked Men are dangerous, and foretel their Deſtruction; and in this they differ from the Joys of good and righteous Perſons. The wiſe Pagans could obſerve this, that there was a Mirth which proved pernicious, there was a Laughter that ended in Tears; as the *Sardonick Laughter* (which was uſed in a Proverbial way) was ſuch a fooliſh and unſeaſonable Laughter as ended in Grief and Miſchief. But hear the Determination of *Solomon*, the wiſeſt of Men, the greateſt Virtuoſo and experimental Philoſopher that ever was, one that tried all the World's Pleaſures. *I ſaid* (ſaith he) *of Laughter, it is mad, and of Mirth what doth it*? Eccl. 2. 2. He being now reduc'd to a ſober Temper, after all his wild Ranges in the World, pronounces immoderate and profuſe Mirth to be the Guiſe of Bedlams and Frantick Perſons, who are wont to laugh, and give Signs of extream Joy when they are moſt outragious, and do the greateſt Miſchief. There is the Laugher of Fools and diſtracted Perſons, who laugh when their Lands are begg'd, and when they themſelves are laugh'd at for their Folly. *All Mirth* then is not of a commendable Nature, nor is all of it what it appears to be. *Even in Laughter the Heart is ſorrowful, and the End of Mirth is Heavineſs*, as the ſame wiſe Man avers, *Prov.* 14. 13. *Nabal*'s Heart was merry, but it ſoon died within him, and became as ſenſeleſs as a Stone. And of the Jovial Race of the ungodly, it is obſerv'd, that though *they*

take the Timbrel and Harp, and rejoyce at the Sound of the Organ, though they ſpend their Days in Wealth and Merriment, yet in a Moment they go down to the Grave. The Joys and Pleaſures of the Ungodly do but portend their enſuing Sorrows. What ſaid *Abraham* to the rich Glutton in his Bed of Flames? *Remember that thou in thy Life-time receivedſt thy good Things.* Thoſe *good Things* were the Delights and Pleſures he enjoyed here, and they were but a Prelude to the *evil Things*, which he was to receive afterwards. The former are gone, and the latter ſucceed in their Place: And this is that which harden'd Sinners muſt expect, namely, that their Enjoyment of *good Things* here, ſhall be followed with *evil Ones*, Torments, and eternal Plagues hereafter. Then ſhall be weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of Teeth: There the Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched. Let it be granted then, that ſenſual Joy and Mirth are the Portion of the vileſt Men in this World; but withal let it be remembred that all theſe are Fore-runners of unſpeakable Sorrow and Anguiſh in another. This being ſo, they have no Cauſe to brag of their *Joys*, and to *object* againſt thoſe of the *Righteous*. And ſo much ſhall ſuffice in Way of Reply to the foregoing *Cavils*, maugre which the Propoſition which I have proved and illuſtrated, is ſtill impregnable, *viz.* That righteous Men are the only Poſſeſſers of ſolid Joy and Gladneſs.

IV. In the laſt Place, let us ſee what *Inferences* may be deduced from what hath been ſaid.

1. I juſtly infer from the Premiſes, that it is a falſe Report and a Slander rais'd againſt Religion and the ſincere Profeſſers of it, that there is no *Content* and *Complacency*, no Delight and Pleaſure in a virtuous Life, but that they who reſolve to become *Chriſtians indeed*, muſt bid Farewel to all *Mirth*, they muſt not expect to ſee any more pleaſant Days, but bury themſelves in Darkneſs and Melancholy.

This Notion hath ſtrongly poſſeſs'd Mens Minds, and hinders them from betaking themſelves to Religion in good Earneſt. The witty Man is afraid he he ſhall grow blockiſh and ſtupid, if he be religious. The ambitious Man thinks he ſhall be degraded from his Honours. The Covetous fears he ſhall die a Beggar, if he hath no other Gain but Godlineſs. And ſo all Men that are addicted to Vice unanimouſly remonſtrate againſt Religion, becauſe they imagine it robs them of their Joys and Pleaſures, becauſe it bids them forſake what is moſt delightful to them. But this is a groundleſs Calumny againſt Religion, for this enjoyns us to bid adieu to no Pleaſures but what are unlawful and ſinful, yea, harmful and pernicious to us. Wit, and Honour, and Wealth, and all thoſe innocent Things which Men are ſo *glad* of, were never diſcarded by Chriſtianity. All the lawful Delights and Entertainments of Life are allowed us. Religion doth not make Men ſad and forlorn, it doth not damp the Hearts, and ſink the Spirits of its Votaries (as ſome deluded Men vainly fancy), but it adds to all their innocent Pleaſures, and is it ſelf the greateſt Pleaſure imaginable.

2. I infer this, that this great Privilege and Bleſſing in the Text, ought to be a prevalent Motive to Virtue, a powerful Perſuaſive to a godly Life. If any Man would cheriſh this pleaſant Affection of *Joy*, which is ſo congruous and grateful to his Soul, if he would *ſee good Days*, and live cheerfully and contentedly, *let him eſchew Evil and do Good*, let him *deny Ungodlineſs and wordly Luſts, and live ſoberly, righteouſly and godlily*, let him *exerciſe himſelf to have a Conſcience void of Offence towards God and towards Men.* What *Motive* can more efficaciouſly influence on you all, and perſuade you to do this than that which I now offer to you? This alone hath Virtue enough in it to allure you to a holy Life, and to prevail with you to make Religion your grand Employment. The Joys and Pleaſures of Chriſtians are not all in Reverſion. Such is the infinite Goodneſs and Bounty of God, that although he hath made Heaven to be the Place of compleat Joy and Reſt, yet he is pleaſed to reward an holy Life with preſent Joys and Pleaſures in this World. Righteous Men taſte enough of theſe here to make them amends for all the Difficulties and Troubles they meet with in this Life.

3. Let the Propoſition which I have treated of be copied out in the Practice and Behaviour of all good Chriſtians. Let thoſe of you who have ſincerely devoted your ſelves to the Service of God, and have faithfully diſcharged your Duty

ty according to your Power, lay aſide your Mourning-weeds, and cloath your ſelves with the Garments of *Joy*. Dry up your Tears, and ſilence your Sighs, put on a joyful Look, and let not Sadneſs and Penſiveneſs dwell on your Faces any longer. Let the World ſee and be convinced that you do not ſerve a hard Maſter, and that the Yoke of Chriſt is not difficult and inſupportable. You I ſpeak to who have an inward Senſe of Religion, and know experimentally what Godlineſs and a holy Life, and a good Conſcience are. Remember that the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks to them in the 32d *Pſalm* v. 11. *Be glad in the Lord, ye Righteous: And ſhout for Joy all ye that are Upright in Heart.* Light is ſown for you. You have the greateſt and the only Reaſon to be glad: For there are Joys and Feſtivities proper to Religion, and if you profeſs this, you cannot be without thoſe. A good Chriſtian ſhould be a joyful Creature ſaid that Man of God *Martin Luther* * Though *Philo* ſaid truly, † An unfeigned Joy and Serenity are in God only, that is, the Joy, which is every ways *Abſolute* and *Conſummate* is appropriated to God alone, yet it is as true that the Joy and Gladneſs which holy Men are capable of, are their inſeparable Portion, and are become their Duty, as well as their Privilege and Happineſs * Wiſdom is no harſh and tetrick, but is joyful and ſerene, full of Mirth and Gladneſs, as the ſame excellent Perſon repreſents it. All the wiſe Part of the World hath agreed in this: Yea, among the *Greeks*, the very * *Name* of a *good Man* is thought by ſome to be derived from his *rejoycing*. I am now calling upon you to act according to your Denomination. You that are Good and Righteous live according to your Title.

And to *excite* you to it, let me offer theſe *Conſiderations* to you. Firſt, Think of the *Divine Command* and *Injunction*, and think how often it is repeated in the Holy Volume. Nay, you are enjoyned to *Rejoice evermore*, 1 Theſſ. 5. 16. The Import of which Precept I take to be this, that we be always in a ſerene, calm and pleaſant Temper of Mind, that we be ever diſpoſed in our Souls to holy Mirth, and alſo that we embrace all fit Occaſions and Opportunities of acting this Duty and diſcharging this Chriſtian Office, that in all Conditions and States of Life, whether proſperous or adverſe, we maintain and exerciſe this noble Virtue, that we wear the ſame Countenance (as 'tis ſaid *Socrates* did) at Home and Abroad. Thus it is made here the perpetual Duty of a *Chriſtian*, and in many other Places of Scripture it is bound upon us by the Divine Command, which in impoſing of it, conſulted, without Doubt, our real Intereſt and Advantage.

Secondly, Remember that by your chearful Carriage in the Ways of Religion you will hugely *credit and honour Chriſtianity*, and cauſe the World to have good Thoughts of it. Hereby you may invite Strangers, and thoſe that ſtand without the Pale of the Church to come near and look over, and enquire into, and at laſt love that Religion which is accompanied with ſo much Joy and Delight: It is certain that Chriſtanity is an eaſy Yoke, and a light Burthen, and it it was the Deſign of our bleſſed Saviour to fill Man's Breaſts with Joy and Gladneſs. The Evangelical Prophet ſpeaking of the Privileges of the Goſpel, and of the flouriſhing of Chriſt's Kingdom, tells us both in the Beginning and End of his 35th Chapter, *The Wilderneſs and the ſolitary Place ſhall be glad, and the Deſert ſhall rejoice. And the Lord ſhall comfort* Sion: *Joy and Gladneſs ſhall be found therein, and Thankſgiving, and the Voice of Melody.* And again he ſaith, Chap. li. v. 3. *The ranſomed of the Lord ſhall come with Songs and everlaſting Joy upon their Heads: They ſhall obtain Joy and Gladneſs, and Sorrow and Sighing ſhall flee away.* This is the lovely Pourtraiture of Chriſtianity, and it may commend it to all Men, and invite them to embrace ſo holy and ſo pleaſant an Inſtitution. Let it appear in the Lives of good Men that Chriſtianity is really ſo, that hereby many Proſelytes may be gain'd to their holy Religion.

Hereby likewiſe (which is the third Thing I deſire you to conſider) you may ſtrengthen and confirm the weakeſt Retainers to Chriſtianity, who might otherwiſe be diſheartned by that evil Report which ſome have brought upon a holy and a ſtrict Life. If thoſe that are throughly perſuaded of their Duty, would in good Earneſt practiſe it, and diſcover the *Pleaſure* and *Satisfaction* that they find in ſo doing, if they would baniſh all groundleſs Grief and Penſiveneſs, and

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* Colloq. Menſal.

† Μόνος ὁ θεὸς ἀψευδῶς ἑορτάζειν. De Cherub.

* Ὀυ σκυθρωπὸν ϗ αὐχμηρὸν τὸ τῆς σοφίας εἶδος, ἀλλ' ἔμπαλιν ἱλαρὸν γαληνίζον, μεστὸν γηθοσύνης ϗ χαρᾶς. Philo

** Ἀγαθὸς ab ἄγαν ſeu α intenſiv. & γηθέω gaudeo.

rejoyce in their Duty and the Service of God, they might moſt happily ſtifle the *Jealouſies* and Scruples of many tender Perſons, and cauſe them to abandon all Diſcontent and Melancholy, and ſerve God with a *chearful* and ſedate Spirit, looking upon Wiſdom's Ways as Ways of Pleaſantneſs, and all her Paths as Peace.

Fourthly, By your pleaſant and chearful Behaviour you may check the extravagant and groundleſs Mirth of the wicked World, or at leaſt give intelligent Perſons to underſtand that you have greater Reaſon to rejoyce than they that uſually do it ſo often and ſo openly. If Men of vicious Principles, and of unholy Lives can afford to be ſo cheery, I can ſee no Reaſon why good and holy Men that are the Friends of God, and the Favourites of Heaven, ſhould not much more rejoyce. It is certain that there is no Religion in the World, hath a Stock of ſuch excellent Principles as the *Chriſtian* hath, which are able to buoy up our Spirits in the greateſt Storms and Tempeſts, and to create a Calmneſs and Serenity in the moſt troubled Soul. Chriſtian Men have the greateſt Reaſon in the World to let Joy ſit upon their Foreheads, and to baniſh all ſour and melancholick Looks, for they have greater *Helps* and Aſſiſtances promiſed and aſſured them than are offered in any other Way or Inſtitution whatſoever: And the *Rewards* which are aſcertain'd them are alſo greater and ſurer.

Conſider in the *fifth Place*, That by the Joy and Gladneſs of your Minds, you will be fitted to ſerve God more acceptably. For firſt, by this you are effectually enabled to moderate all ſenſual Pleaſures, and to abſtain from all unlawful and ſinful Ones, which is no mean Attainment of Chriſtianity, and exceedingly prepares you for a holy Life. The Sun puts out common Fires. Spiritual and Divine Joys will extinguiſh thoſe that are merely Senſual and Carnal: And by entertaining the former in your Souls, you will eaſily learn to deſpiſe the latter. But beſides, this Spiritual and Sanctified Joy will not only damp an dallay the Pleaſures of Vice, but it will *actually* enable you to perform your Duty, and to find an ineffable *Delight* and Complacency in it. This is like the *anointing* of old, in order to their *running* in the *Olympick* Games. This *Oil of Gladneſs* will render you *quick* and *active*, inſpire you with *Strength* and Vigour, whereby you may *run* the Ways of God's Commandments, and not account them *grievous*. Moreover, *This Joy* will enable you not only to abſtain from pleaſurable Vices, and to diſcharge your Duty though never ſo difficult, but alſo to ſuffer for Chriſt Jeſus, and a good Conſcience. Thus the holy Men of old were [ſtrengthened with all Might, according to Chriſt's glorious Power, unto all Patience and Long-Suffering] with *Joyfulneſs* (as the great Apoſtle ſpeaks.) Theſe are admirable Effects and Conſequences of this holy Joy: And they are all of them *Motives* to this excellent Duty.

In the laſt Place, Would you know *how you may attain to the Practice of it*, and experimentally find this Doctrine true, that Chriſtianity is attended with ſolid Joy and Gladneſs; then,

1. See that you religiouſly and conſcientiouſly make uſe of all *Means* and *Helps* which God hath inſtituted to this Purpoſe.
2. Carefully avoid the Commiſſion of all known Sin.
3. Be Sincere and Upright.

Firſt, Betake your ſelves to the *proper Means*. Know this then that in the Solemn Aſſemblies of devout Chriſtians, you may expect to hear the Voice of Joy and Gladneſs. *I was glad* (ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*) *when they ſaid unto me, Let us go into the Houſe of the Lord*, Pſ. cxxii. 1. He rejoyced at this Motion, much more was he tranſported with Joy, when he was actually engaged in the publick Service of God. How have the Souls of holy Men been raviſh'd with the regular and united Devotions of the Church? What unutterable Joys and Solaces are communicated to them by theſe? How are their ſorrowful Minds refreſhed, their Tears dried up, and their Hearts enlarg'd? It was a *Complemental Elogy* given to *Titus Veſpaſian*, That he never ſent away any Man from his Preſence *ſad* and *ſorrowful*. But it is undoubtedly true (without the Aid of an Hyperbole) of the King of Kings, that he never lets any humble Penitent (who heartily and ſincerely forſaking his Sins, makes his Addreſſes to him) go away from his Preſence ſad and diſconſolate,

conſolate, but repleniſhes his Soul with abundant Joys and Conſolations. The Courts of the Lord's Houſe are calculated for Gladneſs: And all the ſacred Ordinances thereof are ſubſervient to it, and help to convey it to us. The *Lord's Day* or Chriſtian Sabbath was inſtituted for this Purpoſe. The *Holy Sacrament* of *Chriſt's Body and Blood* is the great Evangelical Feaſt of pious Souls and Joy and Thankſgiving are inſeparable from it. The Wine in the Euchariſt makes glad the Hearts of the Faithful, and it is at this Supper that they are regal'd with heavenly Delicacies: Here the Church, the Spouſe of Chriſt, *ſits down under the Shadow of her Beloved with great Delight, and his Fruit is ſweet unto her Taſte.* Are you deſirous to excite your Spiritual Joy? Then come hither, partake of theſe holy Viands, and refreſh your ſelves at the Table of the Lord.

Again, If you would promote this pleaſant Affection, be often *praiſing and extolling God's Name*, offer up Thanſgiving daily to him: *Speak to yourſelves in Pſalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, ſinging and making Melody in your Heart to the Lord, giving Thanks always for all things unto God the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, Epheſ. v. 19, 20. If you are willing to advance your Spiritual Joy, ſee likewiſe that you be frequent and ardent in *Prayer*: Humbly confeſs your Sins and Miſcarriages, heartily implore the Divine Grace and Favour both for yourſelves and others; and on all Occaſions hold Converſe and Communion with Heaven, and thereby you will find abundant Conſolation and Joy derived to you. Next, take Care that you conſult the holy Oracles of *Scripture*, that you daily read and meditate on them: And then you will be able to ſay with the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſ. cxix. 24. *That God's Teſtimonies are your Delight*, and *Pſ.* cxix. 3. *The rejoycing of your Heart.* Love to have this Divine Law explained and applied to you by the Miniſters of the Goſpel. Moreover, confer with underſtanding and wiſe Chrſtians, hold Communion with your Brethren, ſtudy God's Providence, and take Notice of his Dealings in the World, and by all theſe Ways and Methods you will increaſe your Comfort, and add to your Spritual Joys.

Secondly, If you would cheriſh a continual Joy in your Souls, be ſure that you give not Way to the Commiſſion of any known Vice. This will be a happy Expedient not only to *promote*, but to *ſecure* our Joy to us. For it is the Commiſſion of Sin only that can put us out of God's Protection and Favour, and that makes us obnoxious to his Diſpleaſure and Anger. Now the Senſe of this muſt needs ſtifle our Joy, and it is impoſſible to walk chearfully, when we offend God, and wilfully break his Commandments. Beſides, Sin it ſelf in its own Nature, is productive of Fear and Anxiety, of Perplexity and Diſtraction of Mind, of Horrour and Amazement, of Anguiſh and Regret of Soul, which are directly oppoſite to the comfortable Affection of true Joy. * Therefore wicked Men can have no true Joy. This is the Fruit only of a good Conſcience. Men of Vice and Folly cannot poſſibly be glad: No Man can attain to this but he that is the Maſter of Patience, Juſtice, Temperance, and other Virtues. Such like Aphoriſms as theſe you meet with in *Seneca* and other Moraliſts. If you apply them to *Chriſtianity*, and a Life led according to the Rules of the Goſpel, they are much more true. None are capable of real Gladneſs, but thoſe that are Good. A Man's ſureſt Foundation of Rejoycing is his being not conſcious to himſelf of any wilful Tranſgreſſion. His Eaſe and Content of Mind flows from a real Senſe of Goodneſs, and a ſerious Reflection on the Integrity of his Actions, performed by the Aſſiſtance of the Spirit of Grace. If you are deſirous then to walk comfortably and joyfully, you know what Courſe you muſt take: You muſt abandon your Sins, you muſt hold no Correſpondence with the Evil Spirit, you muſt devote yourſelves to the Ways of God, and diſcharge your Duty with the utmoſt Induſtry and Diligence.

Thirdly and *Laſtly*, my Text acquaints you that *Joy* is the Bleſſing of thoſe that are *Upright in Heart*: And therefore as you deſire that happy Inmate in your Breaſts, you are to be careful that *Sincerity* and *Uprightneſs* be lodged there too. It is a certain Truth that no Hypocrite can rejoyce, or if he doth, his Rejoycing is counterfeit and hypocritical. It was *walking before God in Truth, and*

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* Stulti & mali non gaudent. Non poteſt gaudere, niſi fortis & juſtus. Gaudium non naſcitur, niſi ex virtutum conſcientia.

with a perfect Heart that comforted *Hezekiah*, Iſai. xxxviii. 4. *Our rejoycing is this*, ſaith the Apoſtle, 2 Cor. i. 12. *the Teſtimony of our Conſcience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity we have had our Converſation in the World.* Wherefore root out all Hypocriſy and Diſſimulation, as you hope to be filled with Joy and Gladneſs. Though your Lives have many Frailties and Imperfections, yet look to this that you be ſincere and upright in all you do, and that you heartily aim at the Glory of God in all your Words and Actions. This, this alone will create in you a real and firm Joy through the whole Courſe of your Lives; and when you come to leave this World, it will adminiſter a more abundant Solace to you, and enable you to depart in Peace, and in aſſured Expectation of the Joys of Heaven.

THE

THE
JUDGMENTS
THAT ATTEND
SINNERS.

Ecclesiastes xi. 9.

[The latter Part of the Verſe]

But know thou, that for all theſe things God will bring thee into Judgment.

The whole Verſe runs thus,

Rejoyce, Oh young Man in thy Youth, and let thy Heart chear thee in the Days of thy Youth, and walk in the Ways of thy Heart, and in the Sight of thine Eyes: But know thou for all theſe things God will bring thee into Judgment.

R*Ejoyce, Oh young Man.*] Upon which Words I imagine I hear the voluptuous and prophane Perſon make this moſt curſed Comment: Ay, this is good Doctrine indeed, I like *Solomon*'s Council very well; now (if ever) he ſpeaks like a *wiſe Man*. For what can be better than to rejoyce in our youthful Years, and ſpend the Time in Mirth and Jollity: To eat, drink, and be merry, no Life like that. To feed highly, to lodge ſoftly, and fare deliciouſly every Day, theſe are the eſſential Parts of Man's Life. Religion is a dull and diſmal Thing, 'tis good for nothing but to make Folks melancholy and mopiſh. There's no Carouzing and Ranting to divert our tedious Hours, no frolick Cups to cheriſh our fainting Spirits, no ſoft and melting Dalliances; no briſk and airy Entertainments to keep our Minds from growing ſober. No wonder then that *Solomon*, the beſt of Preachers, and wiſeſt of Men, bids us be free and debonair, [*Rejoyce in our Youth*] and take a Taſte of all Delights.

Thus the brutiſh Epicure and ſenſual worldling makes this Interpretation of theſe Words, to fit his own carnal and debauched Appetite. But the *Man* (or, *Brute* rather I ſhould call him) is ſo taken with this *former* Clauſe of the Words, (which he reads over and over again) that he hath no Time (no Mind, at leaſt) to look on the *latter*. But if he will but read on a little *further*, he ſhall find that which will damp his Courage, take down his Creſt, and check all his Vaunting. [*But know thou, that for all*, &c.] As *Abner* once ſpoke to *Joab*, ſo may it be ſaid to the ſecure Sinner, [*Knoweſt thou not that it will be Bitterneſs in the latter End.*] The *Period* and *Cloſe* of all will prove moſt fatal and deplorable. *Solomon* ſeems as 'twere in this *laſt* Clauſe of the Words to take the young Man by the Hand, and lead him to the Brink of the bottomleſs Pit, to conduct him to the Confines of that Lake which burns with Fire and Brimſtone, and bids him look in, and ſee what is there [*Know thou, that for all theſe Things God will bring thee into Judgment.*]

You may feel the very Flames of Hell in every Word. [*Know thou*] There's the *Certainty* of the Puniſhment. Know it for an *undoubted Truth*, do not deceive and flatter thy ſelf; thou art as ſure to ſuffer eternal Flames, as if thou wert actually environ'd with them this very Moment. [For all *theſe Things*], (which is *another* Flaſh of Hell-Fire) for *theſe Things* mentioned immediately before, *viz.* thy looſe and extravagant *Rejoycing, thy walking in the Ways of thy Heart, and the Sight of thy Eyes*, for thy ſinful and unlawful Pleaſures which thou ſo freely didſt indulge, for theſe ſhort and momentary Delights thou muſt ſuffer eternally, For all theſe Things [*God will bring thee into Judgment*]. Here ſtill the Flames are augmented, for [*'tis a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living God*], *Heb.* x. 31. And in Chap. xii. 19. [for God is a conſuming Fire]. And therefore we may with Aſtoniſhment put thoſe Queſtions to our ſelves, [*Who amongſt us ſhall dwell with devouring Fire? Who amongſt us ſhall dwell with everlaſting Burnings*? Eſay xxxiii. 14.] [*God will bring Thee into Judgment*]; (ſtill here is *more* Fuel added to the Fire.) *Thee*, youthful Sinner, who wert bleſſed with ſo much Time and Opportunity, with Wealth and Strength, and all the Advantages of a blooming and vigorous Age; *Thee*, whoſe Members of thy Body, and Faculties of thy Soul, were freſh and flouriſhing, fit to ſeek and ſerve thy Maker, and now in Time to prepare for Eternity. God will deſervedly bring *Thee* into Judgment; [*into Judgment*], which *laſt Word* is the compleating and ſumming up of all the reſt; this is the very Top and Extremity of all Miſery, and is as much as can be pronounced to expreſs the horrid Condition of the impenitent Sinner, as I ſhall ſhew you in ſeveral Particulars in the ſequel of this Diſcourſe.

But firſt, (that I may contribute what I can to your better underſtanding the Deſign of the Text) give me Leave briefly to ſet before you the *Connection* of it with the reſt of this Chapter. You may take notice then, that the former Part of this Chapter is wholly ſpent in an Exhortation to Charity and good Works (which is incomparably ſet forth by ſundry elegant Alluſions and Similitudes). After which, Ver. 17. there follows a *Prolepſis*, wherein the wiſe Man prevents an Objection, which perhaps many rich Men would be ready to ſtart, What! (ſay they) muſt we not make much of *our ſelves*, and do *our ſelves* all the Good we can in the firſt Place? Muſt not our Charity commence at *Home*? Is not this Life a very pleaſant Enjoyment, and are there not very comfortable Accommodations that attend it? May we not be indulgent to our ſelves in the free Uſe of them? This I take to be the Import of *thoſe* Words, [*Truly the Light*, i.e. this Life, *is ſweet and a pleaſant Thing it is for the Eyes to behold the Sun*], to enjoy this Life without Sorrow, to live cheerfully, as the next Verſe ſheweth. But obſerve what is there ſaid in further, [*If a Man live many Years, and rejoyce in them all, yet let him remember the Days of Darkneſs, for they ſhall be many: all that cometh is Vanity*]. As if he had ſaid, Grant it that a Man ſhould live here a long and proſperous Life, yet the Thoughts of of what is to ſucceed hereafter, and may happen to him at unawares, will ſowr all his Pleaſures, ſtain all his Joys, and diſturb all his Mirth. *The Days of Darkneſs* will ſhadow and obſcure all his Jollity. [All that cometh is Vanity.] Now then obſerve the Connection of the Words of the Text From hence the Royal Preacher takes Occaſion to correct the young Man's Extravagancy, and to remind him of what is to come; he corrects his preſent Behaviour, by the Propoſal of future Judgment. He tells him, that his profuſe Joy may be overcaſt with the Days of Darkneſs.

So then here is, 1. An Ironical *Conceſſion* [*Rejoyce, O young Man*, &c.] 2. A ſerious *Correction.* [*But know thou, for all theſe things*, &c.] And in a very *appoſite* Manner in the *former* of theſe propounded, for the young Man, who hath no mean Opinion of his own Wit and Parts, and inures his Tongue to ſcoff and droll, is accordingly here accoſted with a ſharp Sarcaſm, he is ſpoken of Ironically, and by Way of Deriſion [*Rejoyce, O young Man, and let thy Heart cheer thee, and walk in the Ways of thy Heart.* This Manner of Addreſs is very well fitted to the Guiſe of *young Men*, who are commonly given to Scoffing and Jeſting. This is not much unlike that Manner of ſpeaking in *Rev.* xxii. 11. [*He that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt ſtill ; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill*]; or like that in *Prov.* vi. 10. [*Yet a little Sleep, a little Slumber, a little folding of the Hands to Sleep*]: where *Solomon* bids the Sluggard ſleep on, and take his Eaſe without Control: But withal he tells him, that Want and Penury are marching on towards him, with a full (or rather indeed, an empty) Body. [*So ſhall thy Poverty come, as one that travelleth, and thy Want as an armed Man*].

In a reſembling Sort he ſpeaks here in the Text: Go to, vain Man, live after thy own Faſhion, take thy Swing to the full, indulge thy ſelf in all the Luſts of the Fleſh, gratify the ſinful Deſires and Corruptions of thy Heart, cloſe with all wicked and unlawful Actions, delight thy ſelf in all vicious Objects. But wilt thou remember, O vain Man, that for all theſe Things God will bring thee into Judgment? After all the World's Junkets and delicate Fare, here is a bitter Morſel that puts all the *reſt* out of Taſte. After all the Sinners *falſe* and *flattering* Reckonings, here's the *true* Account and Sum of all Sin, that its *End* and *Iſſue* are moſt forlorn and deſperate. It may be ſaid of it as of that Harlot in *Prov.* v. 3, 4. [*Her Lips drop as an Honey-comb, ---- but her End is bitter as Wormwood, ſharp as a two-edged Sword: Her Feet go down to Death, her Steps take hold on Hell.*]

——*Turpiter atrum, deſinit in piſcem*
Mulier formoſam ſuperne.

Sin, though it paint it ſelf, and ſeem never ſo fair and beautiful, yet at laſt it appears in its own Colours, and proves to be moſt horrid and deformed: The Paint will drop off at the Approaches of Hell-fire, and then the World will confeſs (tho' too late) that the Fruit of Sin is everlaſting Sorrow, Ruin and Deſtruction.

[*Know thou, that for all theſe Things God will bring thee into Judgment*] *viz.* A fivefold Judgment, 1. A Bodily and Outward One, on the Perſon, Eſtate, and external Relations. 2. A Spiritual and Inward One, namely, the Sting or Torment of a wounded Conſcience. 3. A Perſonal and Particular Judgment at Death. 4. The General and Laſt Judgment at the Reſurrection. 5. The Final and Eternal Judgment both of Soul and Body, namely, Hell it ſelf and everlaſting Torments with the Devil and his Angels.

And oh! that whilſt I ſpeak, and you hear of *Judgment* we may all *tremble* (as *Felix* did at St. *Paul's* Preaching on this Subject), *tremble* (I ſay) but not with that ſlaviſh Fear which is to be ſuſpected *Felix* laboured under, but with a filial one, ſo as never to dare to commit thoſe Sins which may provoke the incenſed Majeſty of Heaven to bring us into Judgment. To come then to what I propounded.

1. Know, O impenitent Sinner! that an external and bodily Judgment, ſuch a one as concerns the outward Condition of this Life, is oftentimes, by the juſt Appointment of the Great Judge of Heaven and Earth, the Portion of diſſolute and incorrigible Sinners. To this the Hiſtory of all Ages gives us an unanimous Suffrage. The old World became an early Inſtance of this Truth, when being defiled and polluted with univerſal Guilt, it was ſwept away with a Deluge. * And *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* are a notable Example of Sinners periſhing by the *other* Element, for the ſacred Records acquaint us that whilſt they burned with inhumane Luſt, Fire and Brimſtone came down from Heaven and deſtroyed them. So thoſe fifty that invaded the ſacred Function, and preſumed to offer Incenſe, without God's Warrant, were conſumed with Fire from the Lord. *Corah, Dathan* and *Abiram* (that miſerable Triumvirate of daring Rebels and Mutiners, were ſad Examples of a

* It was the Opinion of *Thales* and ſome other Ancients that the World was *made out of Water*: We are ſure that the firſt Inhabitants of it were *deſtroy'd by that Element.*

Temporal Judgment, of whom we read that the *Earth*, a third Element, opened its Mouth, and ſwallowed them up alive. The Time would fail me to tell of *Pharaoh* and *Nebuchadnezzar* (two great Potentates) who were made ſignal Spectacles of God's Diſpleaſure even in this World. The one for the Hardneſs of his Heart was overthrown, and deſtroyed in the *Water*, the other on the *Land* (as I may ſo ſay;) for this Great Monarch for his Pride and Prophaneneſs was depoſed from his Royal Seat, and turn'd out into the Fields to graze with Oxen, and wild Aſſes. And to paſs to the Records of the *New Teſtament*, *Ananias* and *Saphira* were ſtruck dead upon the Spot. *Herod*, that inſulting Miſcreant, was another remarkable Inſtance of corporal Judgment; [γενόμενος σκωληκόβρωτος] as St. *Luke* relates it, in *Acts* xii. 23. *He was eaten up of Worms*]: And Eccleſiaſtical Story adds, that he was ſmitten with Ulcers, with the Colick, and Convulſions, and Extremity of Torments in his Body: So that he was, by the Divine Vengeance, made uneaſy and intolerable to himſelf, and loathſome to all, even he who was before applauded and commended of all. Yea, even *then*, when he was cloathed in his *Royal Apparel*, and ſat on his *Throne*, and was flatter'd with that *Acclamation* of his Auditors, [*The Voice of a God, and not of a Man*], *he was immediately ſmitten by the Angel of the Lord.* His Royal Veſtments could not guard him from thoſe loathſome Animals: His Princely Throne could not exempt him from them. There ſat *Herod* full of Majeſty and Vermin, and his Voice was now neither the Voice of God nor of a Man, but of ſome ſtrange and prodigious Monſter.

Moſt of the *Roman Emperors* died violent Deaths, they having been very outragious againſt the Chriſtians, and the Profeſſors of the Goſpel. *Maximinus*, the moſt cruel Son of the cruel *Maximian*, who had invented ſeveral Torments againſt the Chriſtians, was tortured himſelf with ſtrange and unheard of Pains and Diſeaſes. *Julian* the Apoſtate, the ſubtileſt Enemy that the Chriſtians had, in his Expedition againſt the *Perſians*, received a Wound, and taking ſome of the Blood into the Hollow of his Hand, he threw it upwards, crying out, *O thou Galilean* (meaning our Saviour) *thou haſt overcome me:* Which he no ſooner uttered, but he expired, being ſtruck by that inviſible Arrow of Death. And there are Examples both Ancient and Modern of God's Judgments on Swearers, and Drunkards, and perjured Perſons, on Oppreſſors and Extortioners, Whoremongers and Adulterers, Reproachers and Perſecutors of good Men, which I have not now Time to ſet before you.

To conclude this firſt Particular, Let us with the holy *Pſalmiſt* reverently acknowledge, that *God's Judgments* (even his *outward* and temporal ones) *are a great Deep*, Pſal. xxxvi. 6. Let us only do, as the bleſſed Apoſtle in the like Caſe, ſtand on the Brink of it with all Admiration, crying out, ὦ βάθος, *O the Depth of God's Judgments!* even his temporal and outward Judgments!

2dly, There is alſo an Inward and Spiritual Judgment, the Scourge of an evil Conſcience, and this oftentimes is the Allotment of the profligate Sinner. Oh thoſe heavy Strokes, thoſe bloody Laſhes within his Breaſt! He feels there a Herald proclaiming War, and ſummoning to Battel, and what would not a wicked Man give for a Truce with Conſcience? *A good Conſcience* is ſtiled by the Penman of my Text *a continual Feaſt*; but a *bad one* is that Worm which never dies, but makes a continual Feaſt upon the very Heart. Like a ravenous Bird, it preys upon the Entrails and Bowels, and therefore it is thought by Mythologiſts, that *Prometheus's Vultur* was but a Repreſentation of this moſt ſerious Truth, though it was wrapt up in Poetical Fiction. The Effects and Fruits of a reſtleſs Conſcience are livelily expreſſed by the Evangelical Prophet, in *Iſaiah* lvii. 20. *The Wicked are like the troubled Sea, when it cannot reſt, whoſe Waters caſt up Mire and Dirt.* The Wicked are fitly compared to the *Sea*, but not the *Pacifick* one, for (as it follows in the 21ſt Verſe) *There is no Peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked* Which Words (to create in us a ſtronger Belief of the Certainty of them (are the Repetition and Reinforcement of what the Prophet had delivered before in Chap. lxviii. v. 22. [*There is no Peace, ſaith the Lord, to the wicked*]. So ſure and undeniable is it that inward Broils and Tumults diſturb the Breaſts of Sinners, and will not ſuffer them to be at Eaſe. Sometimes they are not only their own *Judges*, but *Executioners*, their Conſciences ſaying to them, as *Job's* Wife to him, *Curſe God, and die.* Thus it fared with *Saul*, and *Achitophel*, and *Judas*: And we are told by *Joſephus*, that *Pilate* being baniſh'd by *Caligula*, and reduced to great Streights, laid violent Hands on himſelf, about four Years after he had condemned our Saviour. This was the direful Effect of *Deſpair*, which oftentimes is the Companion of a troubled Conſcience, a Conſcience over-loaded with the Burthen and Guilt of Sin.

But tho' it comes not to this Height in all Perſons, yet Fear and Aſtoniſhment, Terrors and Alarms are no unuſual Attendants of guilty Sinners. This was threaten'd to the diſobedient *Iſraelites*, after all their bodily and outward Plagues, *The Lord ſhall give you a trembling Heart, your Life ſhall hang in Doubt before you, and you ſhall fear Day and Night*, Deut. xxviii. 65, 66. It is the juſt Doom of the Wicked, *That Trouble and Anguiſh ſhall make them afraid*, Job xv. 24. and *Terrors ſhall take hold on them*, Chap. xxvii. v. 20. If *Cain* were riſen from the dead, he could inform you how painful and tormenting this Fear is. If *Judas* were permitted to return hither, how paſſionately would he inlarge on this Theme? How feelingly would he repreſent the Tortures of a diſtracted Mind? But without the Teſtimony of theſe great Sinners, we may be ſufficiently convinc'd, that a guilty Conſcience is one of the greateſt Plagues, nay, we cannot queſtion whether this be a *Judgment* or no.

3. *Death*, the Diſſolution of Body and Soul, is every ungodly Man's *Perſonal* and *Particular Judgment*. Though I gave you ſome Inſtances before of bodily Judgments which ended in Death and Deſtruction, yet theſe were violent and extraordinary, but now I will ſpeak of that Death which is natural and common, and is the ordinary Cloſe of Mens Lives, and cannot poſſibly be eſcaped. As for the firſt of thoſe *Judgments* before named, *viz.* Outward and Viſible Inflictions on the Body, it is confeſſed that they are not always the Puniſhment of heinous Offenders, for God is pleaſed, for Reaſons beſt known to himſelf, to permit thoſe Men to *proſper and increaſe in Riches* (as the *Pſalmiſt* obſerves) he ſuffers them to go on uncontroll'd, and inflicts not outward Judgments upon them in this Life. Thus many are exempted here by Divine Providence, and are reſerv'd for ſeverer Puniſhments in the Life to come. The *ſecond* Sort of Judgments likewiſe, (*viz.* the Laſh of Conſcience) is not ſo diſcernible in ſome great Sinners, but that they are obſerv'd to be very pleaſant and jovial, or at leaſt to be void of inward Diſtractions and Diſcompoſures.

But though theſe two firſt Kinds of Judgments are not neceſſarily the conſtant and perpetual Attendants of a wicked Life, yet the other three are, which are *Death*, and *the general Judgment*, and *Hell*. It is of theſe three laſt I am now to treat.

O Sinner! thou muſt *die*. And what have I ſaid, or rather what have I not ſaid, when I have told thee that thou muſt *die*? Indeed it ſurpaſſes the Skill of any mortal Creature to expreſs the forlorn Condition, the horrid Cataſtrophe of a dying Sinner. O! a thouſand Worlds, millions of Worlds (if he were Maſter of them) would he willingly part with, ſo he might eſcape the Stroke, the Sting of Death! That is very true of him *now*, which I have read of *Lewis* the 11th of *France*, That he ſtrictly charged his Servants who were about him, that they ſhould not ſo much as name the Word *Death*. The very Name and Noiſe of Death ſtrikes Terror and Aſtoniſhment into a wicked Sinner. As 'tis reported of a People in the *Eaſt-Indies*, that they are ſo terrified with Tygers, that they dare not call them by that Name, but have invented a milder Term for them. Truly *Death* is as wild and ſavage, as horrible and affrightful to a wicked Man: And therefore he cannot endure to hear ſo much as the Name of it: Even that alone ſtrikes him into a cold and quaking Fit: What dreadful Effects then muſt the Thing itſelf have upon him? Let us then now ſuppoſe the Man approaching to his laſt and fatal Hour, and making his Entrance into the very Chambers of Death. The laſt Words of the Philoſopher, when he was leaving the World (tho' they were bad enough) are too good to fit this Man's Mouth, for he cannot ſay with him, *Anxious have I lived, and I die doubting.* No, he may ſay it, to his endleſs Sorrow, I am too well *aſſured* of the Place I am going to, I am certain of it without Diſpute, that my impious Actions can find no other Reward than eternal Torments. And now behold, whilſt he is giving up the Ghoſt (which is with greater Confuſion and Horrour

rour, than can be imagin'd) there are Ghoſts and deadly Fiends hovering about him, and among them his Exit out of the World. As every good and pious Man, like *Lazarus*, hath a Convoy of Angels to waft him into *Abraham*'s Boſom, ſo this wretched Creature hath a black Guard of Devils to ſeize on his Soul, as ſoon as it is divorced from the Body, and to convey it into the Land of Darkneſs.

And now begins the Sinner's *Fatal Doom*, for the Souls of all Men are judg'd *at Death.* Every Soul, as ſoon as it is departed, receives the Sentence of Life or Death. This I may call the *Judgment of Death*, or that irrevocable Sentence which paſſeth on every one in particular, immediately after the Diſſolution of Soul and Body. *Solomon* aſſures us, That though *the Body returns to the Earth, yet the Spirit returns to God*, *Eccl.* xii. 7. i. e. appears before God's Tribunal, it preſently gives up its Account to God. At which very Inſtant he pronounceth, and the Conſcience apprehendeth, the Sentence of Abſolution or Condemnation. The impure and wicked Soul, which left the World without Remorſe and Repentance, feels the latter of theſe, and is condemned and curſed for ever. The wretched Sinner, whilſt his Friends and kind Relations are wringing their Hands and ſhedding Tears for his Departure, is deſtin'd to that Place where there is nothing but Weeping and Wailing. Whilſt his Funerals perhaps are celebrated with Pomp and ſolemn Equipage, Death, the King of Terrors triumphs over him, and Satan, the Prince of Darkneſs, drags him as his Captive, and binds him in Chains of Darkneſs until the Judgment of the great Day, the compleat Judgment of both Soul and Body: And of that I come to ſpeak in the next Place.

4. God will *bring* the Sinner to *Judgment*, i. e. the Terrible Judgment of the laſt Day. The Earth ſhall deliver up her Dead, and the Sea diſembogue thoſe Bodies which were committed to her Cuſtody, and the whole World ſhall ſubmit to an impartial Trial before the Tribunal of Chriſt Jeſus. *God hath appointed a Day in which he will judge the World*, Acts xvii. 31. This is ſtiled *the Day of Wrath, and the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God*, Rom. ii. 5. *And the Day of Perdition of ungodly Men*, 2 Pet. iii. 7. This is a Day that cannot poſſibly be avoided. No Perſons of what Quality or Rank ſoever can plead any Privilege to exempt them from the Proceedings of this ſevere Court of Judicature. [*We muſt all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt*] is the peremptory Determination of the inſpired and infallible Apoſtle. The *Goats* and the *Sheep* ſhall both be ſet forth on each Hand of the Judge: And there ſhall be no *'Scape-Goat* in that Day. The deſperate Demeanour of the Guilty then is well expreſſed in *Rev.* vi. 15, &c. [*The Kings of the Earth, and the great Men, and the rich Men, and the chief Captains, and the mighty Men, and every Bond-man, and every Free-man* (i. e. *All Ranks and Degrees of Men whatſoever*) *hid themſelves in the Dens, in the Rocks of the Mountains, and ſaid to the Mountains and Rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the Face of him that ſitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb: For the great Day of his Wrath is come, and who ſhall ſtand?*] This repreſents the Caſe of thoſe diſmay'd and affrighted Wretches at that Day: They ſhall endeavour to eſcape it, they ſhall attempt to fly for Shelter to the Dens and Rocks, and with their moſt induſtrious Rhetorick, court and beſeech them to fall upon them and cruſh them to nothing (if it were poſſible) that they might avoid the unſufferable Terrors of that Tribunal. But alas! all their Attempts are vain and fruitleſs, for the Mountains, to which they call, are deaf and ſenſeleſs, and the Dens and hollow Rocks, to which they run to hide themſelves, return no other Anſwer to their loud Cries, but a doleful *Eccho*, which will not mitigate, but repeat and enhanſe their Miſery. The Sinner at that Day (like *Saul*) *would lie hid among the Stuff*, and to creep into any Corner that might ſhroud him from him who ſits upon the Throne. But all theſe Endeavours are forc'd and to no Purpoſe, for his Sins ſhall find him out, and preſent him before the great Judge of Heaven and Earth.

The Books *ſhall then be opened*, the huge Volumes of his Conſcience diſplay'd, and all the Contents of his Life ſhall be plain and legible, and all the Errata's and Overſights of that Book ſhall be at once diſcovered, and ſeverely corrected. There ſhall not one ſinful Action eſcape either his own View, or the Judge's Senrence at that Day. *Know that for all theſe Things*, yea, for all Things whatſoever *God will bring thee into Judgment.* For great Sins, and thoſe which thou lookeſt on as little ones, for Sins of Ignorance and Preſumption, for Sins againſt the firſt and ſecond Table; for cuſtomary Sins, and thoſe which are ſeldomer committed; for thy own, and thy other Mens Sins, for the Sins which Darkneſs and Secrecy kept undiſcovered, no leſs than for thoſe which were committed in the Face of the Sun. Thus our Royal Author hath aſſured us in *Eccleſ.* xii. 6. *God ſhall bring every Work into Judgment, with every ſecret Thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* Accordingly the Apoſtle acquaints us, that in that Day *God will judge the Secrets of Men*, *Rom.* ii. 16. the hidden Receſſes and Entrails of Men. There will be held at that Day a great Anatomy, a general *Diſſection* and ripping up of the inmoſt Parts of Man. And how will the Hypocrite dare to appear then, who will be found upon narrow Search to have no *Heart* at all, or a *double one*? What will become of the uncharitable and mercileſs Man, in whom were no *Bowels* of Compaſſion?

All Things (ſaith the Apoſtle) *are naked and open* (unveiled and cut up γυμνὰ ϗ τετραχηλισμένα, ſo laid open that all their Defects and Blemiſhes are diſcover'd) *to the Eyes of him with whom we have to do*, or, (as the *Greek* will bear it, and ſo it may refer to the Accounts of Dooms-day) [*to whom we muſt give an Account.*] There is a Day coming when all Things ſhall be uncaſed and uncovered: The Hearts of all Men ſhall be laid open, and all evil Motions and Contrivances ſhall be brought to light, and their own Conſciences ſhall paraphraſe upon their moſt obſcure Actions. God ſaith by his Prophet *Zephany*, that he will *ſearch Jeruſalem with Candles.* God will (as I may ſo ſpeak with Reverence, and agreeably to the Prophetick Stile) light up the Candles at that laſt and terrible Day, that great Evening of the World; thereby to make a narrow Scrutiny and Inquiſition, to rifle the moſt ſecret Retirements, and ranſack the darkeſt Corners of Mens Hearts, and take an Account of of the moſt hidden Paſſages of their Lives. O thoſe horrid Murders, thoſe damnable Villanies, thoſe laſcivious Practices, which Darkneſs hath concealed from the Eye of the World! Theſe all muſt come to Light: The Mask and Viſard muſt be ſlipt off, and then there will be a new Face of Things, a huge and unexpected Change; Confuſion and Horrour; Trembling and Aſtoniſhment will poſſeſs all the Regions of the Soul, and there will be nothing but a *certain, fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Heb.* x. 27.) O that I could affect my own, and your Hearts with the diſmal Terrors of the Wicked at that laſt Day! O that we could ſufficiently repreſent the horrid Condition of Sinners at that Time!

5thly and *laſtly*, Hell and Eternal Torments with the Devil and his Angels, are the Execution and Conſummation of the laſt Day. This is the laſt Kind of *Judgment*, which the righteous Judge of Heaven and Earth will bring every obſtinate and impenitent Sinner to; [*They that plow Iniquity, and ſow Wickedneſs ſhall reap the ſame*], ſaith one of *Job*'s obſerving Friends. The Upſhot of a wicked Life are a wretched Death, a terrible Judgment, and the Puniſhment of everlaſting Fire. O impenitent Sinner, *Hell* is preparing for thee: The Fire is ſtirred up: Nay, (to ſhew thee thy deſperate Folly) thou heapeſt on Fuel with thy own Hands, as if otherwiſe thoſe Flames would not burn hot enough, when thou comeſt into them. But wilt thou vouchſafe to think a while of Hell-Torments? Wilt thou ſit down and meditate on the affrighting and confounding Sentence of Condemnation, *Depart ye Curſed, into everlaſting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels?* Will you pauſe a little on that intolerable Doom? Will you in good earneſt think of thoſe eternal Flames to which you are ſo ſwiftly poſting? Do you know what Companions you ſhall have there? Do you conſider what a curſed Crew of Devils, what a Pack of damned Creatures you ſhall have yelling and groaning about your Ears? Do you ſeriouſly remember that *Blackneſs* and *Darkneſs* inhabit there? Do you conſider, that hideous Shrieks and horrid

Groans are Hell's Muſick? Do you know that the Stench of Sulphur is the beſt Perfume that Place affords? Do you think of it in good earneſt, that Hunger and Thirſt, Pain and Diſeaſe and the exquiſite Torments, that Shame and Indignation, Envy and Blaſphemy, are the conſtant Attendants of damned Spirits? Do you know what the *Worm of Conſcience* means? Do you imagine how it will gnaw, gripe and moleſt you? The greateſt Heat in Hell will be by Reflection. Do you ever call to mind the woful Paſſions and Poſtures of thoſe forlorn Souls? Do you think of their endleſs weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of Teeth? Did you ever ſpend a ſerious Thought on all or any of theſe woful Circumſtances? If you have not, I hope you will from this Day, and from this plain Diſcourſe, date your ſerious Meditations and Reflections, and throughly perſuade your ſelves of this Truth, that God doth not ſpend all his Stock and Store of Judgments upon Sinners *in this* World. He reſerveth ſome, and thoſe the greateſt and moſt inſufferable, for an *other*. The infernal Flames ſhall be their Allotment, where all the Circumſtances and Aggravations of Miſery do concenter and unite.

And thus I have diſpatched the Particulars which I undertook to expatiate upon: And though the Theme I have inſiſted on may ſeem to you to be black and affrighting, yet I have good Hopes that it is not unwelcome. Surely, I ſpeak not to Perſons who are of the Temper of thoſe *Jews* whom the Prophet *Iſaiah* ſpoke of, *Iſaiah* xxx. 10. [*who ſaid to the Prophet, propheſy not unto us right Things: Speak unto us ſmooth Things, propheſy Deceits.*] Such Men would have the Preacher find out *acceptable Words*, but not in *Solomon*'s Senſe. They are like that King of *Iſrael* who hated the Prophet, [*becauſe he never propheſied good unto him*], i. e. becauſe he would never flatter him, and comply with his depraved Humour. Away with your legal Preacher (ſay they) your Sons of Thunder, that make the Pulpit (like Mount *Sinai*) horrible and dreadful, with Claps of Thunder and Lightning. They fill our Ears with Curſes and Execrations, Threatnings and Denunciations of Judgments: They diſturb our Peace, and will not ſuffer us to ſleep ſecurely, and ſin without Control. They will not permit us quietly to damn our ſelves or others; they ſcare us with Hell, and by diſcharging a whole Volley of Judgments againſt us. But give us a *Barnabas*, a Son of Conſolation, who may treat us with a Text of Mercy, and ſooth us up with a pleaſant Story of Joy and Comfort of Heaven and Happineſs.

But I muſt needs interrupt theſe Mens Dſcourſe; I deſire their Anſwer to ſuch Demands as theſe. I pray tell me, Would you count him an honeſt and diſcreet Phyſician, who knowing that you labour under a Diſeaſe that will prove mortal, unleſs it be ſuddenly prevented, yet notwithſtanding neglects and delays the Cure, and in the mean time flatters you into a Belief of your Recovery? Or, would you eſteem him as a real and faithful Friend, who underſtanding that you are like to be ſurprized by ſome ſudden Danger, inſtead of warning you of it, perſuades you that your Condition is ſafe and ſecure, and bids you not be troubled with the Fear of any Miſchief that may happen to you? Or, to ſpeak yet cloſer to our preſent Purpoſe, Would you ſtile that Miniſter a faithful Embaſſador of Chriſt, who ſeeing War denounced and proclaimed from Heaven againſt you, preſents you with nothing but Tidings of Peace? Will you call him a true Lover of your Souls who ſows *Pillows under your Elbows*, or as the ſame ſacred Stile expreſſes it) *daubs with untempered Mortar*, who never forewarns you of future Puniſhments, and the direful Effects of wilfully offending the Majeſty of Heaven?

The Pen-men of holy Scripture (who certainly were moſt true to the Intereſt and Concernment of Mens Souls) preſent us as well with the wretched and forlorn Condition of the wicked as with the happy State of the truly Pious. The 28th Chapter of *Deuteronomy* is made up of *Curſes* as well as *Bleſſings, I will ſing of Judgment and Mercy*. The Goſpel is fraught with Incouragements and Promiſes to the Diſciples and Followers of Chriſt, and likewiſe with Threatnings and

Woes againſt *Phariſees* and *Hypocrites* and all ſorts of Sinners. And St. *Paul*, who be ſure was no legal Preacher, runs upon this Diviſion, in *Rom.* ii. 6. *&c.* [*Who will render to every Man according to his Deeds: To them, who by patient Continuance in well-doing ſeek for Glory, Honour, and Immortality, eternal Life: But unto them that are contentious, and obey not the Truth, but obey Unrighteouſneſs, Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguiſh*]. Thus this Apoſtle made Choice of a *Text* of *Judgment*; for when he preached before *Felix*, it is ſaid, *he reaſoned of Judgment to come*, Acts xxiv. 25. And being authoriſed by ſo great an Example, I have done the like at preſent.

The *Practical Inferences* that I ſhall leave with you, are theſe four:

1*ſt*, *Fret not thy ſelf becauſe of evil Doers, nor be thou envious at the Proſperity of the Wicked.* Say that they plentifully enjoy the Pleaſures of the World, and thrive in their Sins: Yet remember that this will not continue long. If you obſerve the Providence of God in the World, you cannot but take notice that Sin goes not unpuniſhed. Wicked Men feel the Vengeance of God on their outward Man; they are oftentimes ſignally ſcourged, even in reſpect of their worldly and ſecular Condition; and many of them at the ſame time feel the Furies of an awakened Conſcience, which is yet a greater Puniſhment. However, they ſhall be ſtript naked of all at their laſt Exit out of the World, and that not to be cloathed with Glory and Happineſs (which is the Portion of the Godly) but to be in a greater Readineſs to receive thoſe Stripes and Laſhes which are the unavoidable Recompence of condemned Sinners, for then their Conſciences will be fully awakened, and give them no Reſt: And afterwards theſe Malefactors ſhall appear with Shame and Horrour before the great Tribunal, and ſhall there be ſentenc'd to everlaſting Burnings. You have no Reaſon then to be fretful or envious at the preſent Condition of ungodly Men. A fatal Period is the Conſequence of their evil Actions, and the more proſperous they have been on Earth, the more grievous will their Torments be in Hell.

2*dly*, See and bewail the Folly and Madneſs of all that perſiſt in their Sins. There is not a greater Truth in the World than this, *That God will bring them to Judgment for theſe Things*; yea, all manner of Judgments ſhall be brought upon them: Yet will they not be rouz'd and affected with this Severity, but remain ſtupid and ſenſeleſs, and like the deaf Adder, ſtop their Ears, and are reſolved to go on in their Sins, and conſequently pull down the Judgments of God upon their Heads, Judgments Temporal and Spiritual, in this Life, and in that to come, even eternal Deſtruction. If this be not the Guiſe of *Fools* and *Mad-men*, it is impoſſible to tell what is.

3*dly* then, Be wiſe, and break off your Sins by hearty Repentance; *i.e.* by being heartily ſorry for them, and by forſaking them. Methinks you ſhould not need any *other* Argument to diſſuade you from perſiſting in your evil Ways than this, *Sin lieth at the Door*, Gen. iv. 7. *i.e.* (as ſome underſtand that Place) the *Puniſhment* of Sin is at hand.) It is but our *opening the Door*, as 'twere, or committing of Sin, and preſently *Judgment* ruſhes in upon us, according to the Stile and Speech of the holy Scripture; here *Judgment*, like ſome ravenous and devouring Beaſt, lies at the Door, and whenever we open it by our Sins, is ready to ſtep in, and fly upon us. Think of this, and be not ſo ſottiſh as to indulge your ſelves in your wicked Ways. Let us not dare to expoſe our ſelves to the Wrath of God, by our obſtinate, continuing in the Breach of his holy Laws. Let us then deal faithfully with our ſelves, and fly from Sin, as the only Cauſe and Procurer of Divine Vengeance, and let us by a lively Faith, lay hold on the Bleſſed Jeſus, who came to ſave us both from our Sins and from the Wrath of God, and through his Merits and all-ſufficient Righteouſneſs to purchaſe eternal Life and Happineſs for us. *For there is no other Name given among Men whereby they can be ſaved.* And there is no other Way of partaking of it, but by Faith and Repentance.

[illegible]ly and laſtly, If *Judgments* both Inward and Outward, Temporal and Eternal are by the Decree of Divine Juſtice and Wiſdom, the Reward of impenitent Sinners, then let us make that *Inference* to our ſelves, which St. *Peter* doth in the like Caſe, 2 *Pet.* iii. 11. *What manner of Perſons ought we to be in all holy Converſation and Godlineſs?* How greatly are we concerned to divert God's Judgments, and to avoid his Vengeance, not only by Repentance, but by an actual Reformation of our Lives? When you return Home therefore, conſider ſeriouſly what I have delivered to you: You that are *young Men* eſpecially, be intreated to know in this your Day the Things which belong to your Peace, to ſecure your Welfare both here and hereafter, by delaying not to keep God's Commandments. You have no Time left you to be idle and drowzy, much leſs have you any Hours to ſpare for Looſeneſs and Debauchery, but with the *young Man* in the Text to *Rejoyce* immoderately and profuſely. You have no Time to glut your ſelves with the unlawful Pleaſures of this Life, and ſo to gratify your ſenſual Deſires, as to neglect the weighty Buſineſs of a better and never-failing Life. But if any of you will be ſo laviſh and prodigal of your Time, and ſo forgetful of Eternity, remember that you were told of it, that you ſhall one Day reap the curſed Fruits of this your Folly, *Know that for all theſe Things God will bring thee to Judgment.*

FINIS.

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